

---

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google<sup>TM</sup> books

<http://books.google.com>





HD WIDENER



HW TQJN H

27272.8.10

2 B



**HARVARD  
COLLEGE  
LIBRARY**











# THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL

AND THE

PERCEVAL OF CRESTIEN OF TROYES

[PAPERS REPRINTED FROM THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLK-LORE]

BY

WILLIAM WELLS NEWELL

1206  
20

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

CHARLES W. SEVER & CO., UNIVERSITY BOOK-S7

LEIPZIG: OTTO HARRASSOWITZ, QUERSTRASSE, 14

1902

Digitized by Google 72-10 7-1



27272.88.10

B

✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY  
GIFT OF  
CHARLES HALL GRANDGENT  
JANUARY 14, 1933

Copyright, 1897, 1898, 1899, and 1900,  
By THE AMERICAN FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

*All rights reserved.*







## INTRODUCTION.

THE articles which form the following discussion were published in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Nos. 37, 38, 39, 1897; No. 40, 1898; Nos. 46, 47, 1899; No. 56, 1902. The medium of presentation required a form more popular and less technical than the discussion would naturally have taken, if intended for a journal of Romance philology.

It so happened that, in connection with literary undertakings, the theme had engaged my attention prior to the appearance, in 1888, of Mr. Alfred Nutt's "*Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail*." The inquiry did not, therefore, involve any idea of rivalry with a *confrère* whose unselfish services to folk-lore, and to the publication of Celtic literature, merit the highest esteem.

The discussion may be regarded as a partial justification of opinions set forth in the essay on *Arthurian Romance*, prefixed to "*King Arthur and the Table Round*," Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1897 (Second Impression, 1898). For further defence of opinions expressed in that account, I must refer to a future inclusive work on the "*Matter of Britain*," considered with reference to sources.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., 1902.



## SUMMARY.

### I.

#### THE PERCEVAL OF CRESTIEN.

Theme of the poem, chivalrous education in arms, love, and duty. — *Graal*, or dish, a feature merely incidental; the name *conte del graal* unwarranted. — The unasked question, explained by mediæval proverbial philosophy. — Simplicity of the hero; idea analogous to that of the "Barlaam and Josaphat." — Meaning of the *sobriquet* "li Galois;" Perceval no Welshman; character ascribed to Welshmen in French and English folk-lore . . . . .

### II.

#### JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA, BY ROBERT OF BORON.

Outline of the romance. — Indications of original invention. — Sources; suggestions derived from Crestien; from apocryphal literature. — *Graal*, now turned into a proper name of the Paschal chalice; eucharistic symbolism. — The poem never continued; the story perhaps not intended to be Arthurian. — The Merlin; its character; no work of Robert . . .

### III.

#### LATER PERCEVAL ROMANCES.

Continuators of Crestien; these possessed no information concerning the tale other than that derived from their model; their treatment freely imaginative; their partial dependence on the romance of Robert. — The prose "Perceval" not written by Robert. — Manner in which new developments arose from misinterpretation of single lines in Crestien's poem .

### IV.

#### GALAHAD ROMANCES.

"Nascien" ("Grand St. Graal"), a recast of Robert's romance. — "Agravain." — "Queste del Saint Graal;" origin of the name Galahad. — These works form a much-edited body of romance; motives, artistic and religious, presiding over their construction. — Probable existence of other French versions of the history. — Portuguese "Demanda do Santo Graal"



# Summary.

## V.

### FOREIGN RECASTS.

Criteria of relative antiquity to be applied in passing judgment on mediæval romances. — The "Parzival" of Wolfram of Eschenbach; his probable indebtedness to authors later than Crestien. — The "Krone" of Heinrich of the Türlin; free imagination displayed by this author. — The Welsh "Peredur." — The English "Sir Percevelle" — All these works dependent on the romance of Crestien . . . . . 65

## VI

### NARRATIVES DISTANTLY RELATED.

"Li Biaus Desconnéus." — "Tyolet." — "Carduino." — Analogous folk-tales. — No information obtainable from any quarter in regard to the sources of Crestien. — Review of the evolution of the legend . . . . . 84

## VII.

### GLASTONBURY AND AVALON.

Robert's Avalon (by scribal error, Avaron) identical with Glastonbury; this equation only effected in 1191. — Robert to be regarded as the inventor of the Grail legend . . . . . 93



100-1000

## THE LEGEND OF THE HOLY GRAIL

### I. THE PERCEVAL OF CRESTIEN.

IN several romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, mention is made of a sacred vessel, to which, in English rendering, has been given the name of the Holy Grail. The legend, which is related in various forms, has commonly been supposed to depend on a basis of inherited tradition, and therefore to come within the territory of folk-lore. An understanding of the story, and of its connection with chivalric ideas, can only be obtained by a critical examination of the literary works in which the material is contained. All that will be attempted in the present paper is to give some account of the earliest of these compositions, the poem from which, according to one opinion, the whole cycle originated, and of which all subsequent tales of the Grail would in that case be regarded as only interpretations and expansions.

An "idyll" of Tennyson has made readers in England and America familiar with a story of the Holy Grail. The sacred vessel, according to this account, was the cup of the sacrament, employed in the Last Supper. After the Crucifixion, it passes into the possession of Joseph of Arimathæa, by whom it is carried to Britain. It is kept in a "spiritual city," whence it issues on miraculous journeys, and makes an appearance at the Round Table of King Arthur; it becomes the object of a "quest," to be accomplished only by the most perfect of knights. The hero of the adventure is found in a mysterious youth by the name of Galahad.

Widely different is the part played by the vessel, in the earliest of the productions where it makes an appearance. This is a poem relating to Perceval, written about the year 1175, by Crestien (that is to say, Christian) of Troyes. The development of the cycle of romances treating of the Grail can be comprehended only by proceeding from this interesting work; but I am not aware of any analysis which brings out with clearness what to my mind are the essential characteristics of the tale. It is, therefore, necessary to set forth, in a concise manner, the ideas which, in the opinion of the present writer, are embodied in the remarkable production.

In his earliest extant romance, the author made allusion to a knight of Arthur's court, entitled Perceval li Galois, or Perceval the Welshman. It is, therefore, fair to presume that he may have been acquainted with adventures narrated concerning this personage, with whose fortunes the most important part of his poem is concerned.

Together with the fortunes of his principal hero, the writer also

undertook to recite achievements of Gauvain (in English spelling, Gawain), nephew of Arthur and chief knight of the Round Table, whose fortunes he had in previous compositions only incidentally noticed. For the purpose of avoiding monotony, and bringing into relief the portrait of his central character, he seems to have intended that the secondary portion of the drama should exhibit a certain parallelism to the primary part of the fiction. This ambitious design was carried out with the crudeness inseparable from essay in a new style of composition, and with the result that the two sections remained separable. Furthermore, the task proved too extensive to accomplish within a limited space. After carrying on the tale to a length greater than that of its forerunners, Crestien left the narration unfinished, insomuch that it is not now possible to conjecture in what manner he had proposed to connect the divisions of the fiction. The work, which was probably published after the death of the author, excited universal admiration. Many attempts were made to complete the history, but with total want of success. The continuators evidently possessed no knowledge in regard to the fortunes of the characters other than that obtained from the verse. The deficiency goes far to make it probable that no popular tale existed which had analogy to the poem.

The part of the work devoted to Perceval may be said to constitute the most original and interesting literary production of the twelfth century. The writer undertook to set forth the process of education in chivalry. For this purpose he selected as his hero a simple, but sensitive and intelligent, youth, brought up in the wilderness under the charge of a fond mother, and acquainted with as much as a woman can teach, but wholly unversed in the ways of the world. The tale falls into three sections, reciting respectively instruction in arms, love, and duty.

In order to understand the scenery, it is necessary to take into account the *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose work (according to my own opinion) supplied the outlines into which French Arthurian poets inserted romances which are of an episodic nature. Here it is related that after the death of Uter (Uther) Pendragon, Britain was wasted by Saxons, and the inhabitants of the island reduced to great distress.

In the account of Geoffrey, Loegria, that is to say, England, with the exclusion of Northumbria, formed the essential part of Arthur's kingdom. Following him, French romancers made the realm of "Logres" an ideal land of courtesy and chivalry. According to the terminology of the time, Wales (French Gales) included the Scottish border, Carlisle (in mediæval orthography, Carduel) being designated as belonging to that province. The North of England,





in the twelfth century, formed a vast forest, in which might be encountered giants and fairies, and where might be expected marvellous adventures. This reputation was long retained by the woods of Cumberland. It is accordingly to this region that the widowed mother of the hero withdraws for safety. In the wilderness she builds a manor, and here educates her only son. The time of this flight is not clearly stated, but apparently supposed to have taken place at the period named, previous to the accession of King Arthur, twenty years before the date of the story.

The boy grows up in the simplicity which is the necessary consequence of isolation. Of necessity, he wields the arms, and wears the costume of Welsh rustics, being attired in breeches and gaiters, the hempen shirt and coat, described as the dress of the peasantry. His mother intentionally withholds information in regard to chivalry, being well aware that, in the event of his attaining such knowledge, the youth would insist on seeking his fortune in the world.

An accident furnishes the enlightenment from which he has been jealously guarded. While roving in the forest, the lad falls in with a party of knights, whom he takes for supernatural beings. Being especially struck by the beauty of their equipment, he seeks instruction regarding their armor, inquiring the name and use of each weapon, and learns that it is from King Arthur that the outfit was obtained. Falling in love with the magnificent exterior which he takes for the essential element of knighthood, he determines to visit the king, who is holding court at Carlisle. Unable to prevent her son from carrying out his design, his mother gives him her benediction, and recommends to him the duties associated with chivalry, in especial succor of the unprotected and piety toward the Creator. On his departure, the lady dies of heartbreak.

The youth arrives at Carlisle, and receives an insult from Kay the seneschal. With his own hand he wins the armor he desires, but refuses to return to court until the injury shall be avenged. On his way, he meets a nobleman of honorable aspect, and, following the admonition of his mother, who has charged him to heed the advice of worthies, accepts his lessons. He is shown the use of the arms he bears, and admitted to the honor of knighthood. In performing the ceremony, the tutor, according to custom, enforces the important obligations devolving on a knight. Of these, the principal are the precepts already inculcated, of charity and piety. More specific injunctions are to spare a fallen foe, and to be reticent in speech. The young knight insists on departing to inquire as to the safety of his mother, concerning whose fate he is anxious. So ends the first section, narrating the *enfances* or boyhood of the hero.

The second division of the narrative supplies another step in the



progress of the young warrior, who is made to acquire the enlargement of mind arising from the love of woman. This is accomplished by a mediæval method, through the relief of a distressed damsel. Although the idea is in itself conventional, it is likely that the manner in which the action is described may have been an innovation of the poet. In this new relation, the young champion exhibits the simplicity which is his characteristic, but also the quickness of attainment belonging to his intelligent nature. The desire to learn the condition of his mother prevents him from delaying. With a promise of return, he parts from his friend, and sets out on his homeward journey.

It is the third part of the history, which, according to the statement above made, is principally occupied with ethical problems; and it is in this section of the tale that is introduced a sacred vessel, afterwards called the Holy Grail.

The young knight wanders through the desert, on his way to the manor of his mother, and arrives at the brink of a river. While in doubt as to his course, descending the stream, he observes a skiff, in the bow of which is seated an angler. The latter informs him that the stream is impassable, but that lodging may be obtained in the house of the fisherman. Following the directions vouchsafed, the hero ascends a hill, from the summit of which at first he perceives only woods. Presently he makes out the turrets of a castle embosomed in the trees, whither he repairs. He is received with the usual courtesies, and, after a period of waiting, is conducted to a vast hall. Here he perceives a chimney, carried on pillars of bronze; the hearth is so large that four hundred men might have gathered round it. In front of the fire, reclining on a couch, he sees the master of the castle, who turns out to be the fisherman who had given the invitation; the latter is supported on his elbow, and his head is besprinkled with white hairs. (It is not the intention of the writer to represent him as old.) The host, excusing the infirmity which prevents his rising, summons the stranger to a place at his side; while the two are engaged in conversation take place several remarkable incidents.

An attendant brings a sword, which the master of the castle bestows on his visitor, explaining that the weapon was destined for the guest, but that it will break under certain conditions, which he fails to particularize.

In the hall are visible two doors, opening into separate chambers. From one passage issues a youth, carrying a lance, the head of which exudes blood. He passes between the couch and the fire, and vanishes in the second apartment.

Presently, by the same entrance, appear two youths with ten-

branched candlesticks, aflame with candles. These are followed by a maiden, who in both hands carries a dish (*grail*). The splendor of the vessel, which is magnificently decorated with jewels, astonishes spectators. She is succeeded by another maiden with a small silver platter. Like the bearer of the lance, the party disappears in the other chamber. At every course, the dish and platter reappear. The guest, who remains seated beside his host, wonders at the sights before him, and has on his lips a series of questions. He desires to learn why the lance bleeds, and who is the unseen person served with the dish.

The youth, however, recalls the warning of the preceptor, who had especially charged him against over-freedom of speech. Out of respect to this direction, he holds his peace, although with some doubt; for he remembers to have heard it said that it is possible to err by keeping silent too long, as well as by saying too many things at a time. The hour for retiring arrives; the lord of the house bids good-night to his guest, and is borne to his room, while for the stranger a bed is made up in the hall. On the morrow, the visitor awakens to find himself alone. Vexed at this apparent slight, he dresses himself to the best of his ability, and perceives his arms lying on the dais; he goes to the doors which he had observed on the evening before, and find the chambers closed; he leaves the hall, descends the stair which leads to the court of the castle, at the foot finds his horse, which is saddled and bridled, while his lance leans against the wall. He sees that the bridge is lowered, and takes it for granted that his host has ridden out to the hunt; he rides across, and, as he does so, the bridge is hoisted by an unseen hand; he turns, and shouts an inquiry, but obtains no response.

The road from the castle shows the hoof-prints, which indicate the passage of a body of horse. On this trail he rides, until the signs disappear. He continues his journey by a wood-road, and finds a lady weeping over the body of a headless knight. As in duty bound, he offers his services, and a conversation ensues. Perceiving the sleek condition of his steed, the damsel expresses her astonishment, averring that for a long distance no habitation is to be found. This the youth denies, affirming that he found hospitality in a neighboring mansion, and is then informed that he must have received shelter in the house of the Fisher King. Respecting this personage, — the lord of the mysterious castle, — she furnishes additional information: in a battle he has been shot through both hips with a javelin; and, in consequence of this unhealed hurt, is unable to mount steed. His sole amusement is angling in the river, whence his title of the Fisherman. Had the guest made proper inquiries, the good king would have been healed. As it is, great

## *The Legend of the Holy Grail*

ills will ensue alike to himself and others. She now demands the name of her interlocutor, who announces it to be Perceval li Galois, or Perceval the Welshman. (This is the first time that the hero has been named.) The first part of the appellation she recognizes, and reveals herself as his cousin, also informing the youth of the death of his mother. She declines an invitation to accompany the young adventurer, who proceeds on the track of the knight who has caused her distress.

In regard to the name, the poet observes that Perceval guessed it rightly, although he did not know it. This way of statement is obscure, and the ambiguity of the pronouns has given occasion to miscomprehension; but the context shows that the solution is simple. The reference is not to the proper name, by which Perceval calls himself, and which is recognized as his appellation; it is the epithet that was new; he could not guess that he would come to be known by the title of Welshman. The significance of this remark will presently be explained.

The hero now accomplishes a series of adventures, in the course of which he attains distinction; he avenges the injury of his cousin by defeating the injurer of her knight, and chastises the seneschal for the insult formerly received; he becomes the friend of Gawain, the noblest of cavaliers, and is received with honor in the court of Arthur. At the height of his success, and while he is the cynosure of all eyes, falls the blow that the reader has felt impending; a damsel of hideous aspect appears, who denounces the youth for the negligence that had kept his lips sealed in the presence of his kind host. As a result of this indifference, and in virtue of his failure to make proper inquiries, the Fisher King would never be healed of his infirmity. In consequence, the country, deprived of its protector, would suffer calamity, and orphans and widows would come to abound; for all this misery, he alone would be responsible. Overcome by this unexpected accusation, Perceval vows never twice to sleep in the same house, and never to turn aside from the most desperate adventures, until he shall have learned why the lance bleeds, and who is the mysterious person served with the dish. The tale now leaves the main hero, and proceeds with the adventures of Gawain.

After an intermission of five years, the story returns to Perceval. During the intervening time, the latter has been engaged in his hopeless quest, an exile from Arthur's court, and unable to visit the lady of his love. His sole consolation has been the warfare in which he delights to risk his unregarded life. In these five years, he has sent to Arthur as prisoners sixty knights, but all the while never bethought him of God.

On Good Friday, while riding in complete armor, he meets in the wilderness a party of pilgrims, both knights and ladies, who have repaired to the cell of a hermit, where they have made the confession and received absolution. They proceed barefoot, clad only in the woollen gowns which were the ordinary attire of penitents. The leader of the troop censures the magnificent stranger for bearing arms on the day when Christ died. This rebuke awakens religious thoughts in the mind of Perceval, who, in his distress, has taken no note of times and seasons. He follows the wood-road through which the pilgrims have passed, signing the way by bent boughs, in order that others may be conducted to the place where they have found peace. In a little chapel he finds the hermit, who is reciting the highest and sweetest service that in Holy Church is said. Perceval makes confession to the holy man, who proves to be his uncle. The latter censures his nephew for the death of his mother, who had died of sorrow, on account of the son's departure. This sin it is that has sealed his lips, and prevented him from putting the questions that would have caused the recovery of his host, the Fisher King. The unseen occupant of the chamber into which the dish had been carried is the brother of the hermit, and father of the Fisher King (who is therefore Perceval's cousin). During twenty years this personage has kept his room, nourished by no food other than a consecrated wafer, which is borne in the dish. This sustenance supports his life, so holy is the dish, while the recipient is himself so spiritual that he stands in need of no other food. Perceval receives the exhortations of his uncle, who repeats the injunctions of charity and piety, in the beginning of the tale, inculcated by the youth's mother. During the intervening days he shares the lodging of the anchorite, and on Easter partakes of the sacrament.

The story proceeds with adventures of Gawain, and does not return to Perceval.

The word *graal*, or *greal*, a familiar Romance term, seems to be nothing else but a modification of the Latin (originally Greek) *crater*, bowl. In significance, it answers to the English dish, by which it has been translated. Like the latter, it might or might not have feet to stand on; it might or might not be covered, for the purpose of keeping the viands warm. In the poem, stress is laid on the absence of such covering. The vessel was completely visible, and its magnificent decoration might be noted, a circumstance calculated to intensify the curiosity of the beholder. A usual feature in the description of any remarkable mansion is the splendor of the ware. There is nothing peculiar in the description, other than the epithet holy, applied to the dish.

This attribute of holiness was afterwards explained on the theory that the vessel had been employed in the paschal supper of Jesus. It is, however, to be noted that the dish occupies a subordinate position. The point to be ascertained is not the use of the vessel, but the person therewith served. Moreover, in a later part of the tale, we read of a quest after the lance, but none after the dish. Leaving out of the account the subsequent expansions of the story, one would not think of the eucharist. A hundred other legendary reasons might have been given for the sanctity of a sacred utensil.

The bleeding lance was understood to be that with which Christ was wounded. Such interpretation would not be inconsistent with the ethical design of the poem, and would be sufficiently in accordance with mediæval conceptions and usages. On the other hand, it does not follow that the author intended such explanation. In this case, also, other ideas might have been possible, more in accordance with the spirit of the narration. If some of Crestien's imitators assumed this reference, others discarded the conception, and considered the marvel of the ensanguined spear to be sufficiently accounted for by a supposed historic or prophetic relation to the fortunes of the hero's family. All such notices, one way or the other, are nothing better than guesses, made with no more illumination than belongs to a modern peruser of Crestien's work. Gawain is sent in search of the weapon, which he is apparently expected to carry away with him, and the acquisition of which was to put an end to his feud. It appears unlikely that he would have ventured so to acquire the weapon of the crucifixion.

It is worth observing that the sword, also designed to figure in subsequent story, likewise received a legendary character, as that with which St. John the Baptist had been beheaded; a conception only remarkable as showing the manner in which Christian myths were introduced into matter which originally had no such connection.

Setting aside additions and reconstructions, there is no difficulty in comprehending the poet's idea. To an unseen person are carried a dish and platter, the ordinary utensils of a repast, with a pomp usual in the banquets of royal personages. In the present instance, however, the vessels are almost empty. The tenant of the chamber has no need of ordinary food. This exemption arises from his religious vocation. In virtue of ascetic piety, he is able to dispense with secular nutriment, subsisting by the grace of God. Such superiority to the partaking of daily bread is otherwise mentioned as the reward of pious affection. A symbol of the divine bounty, the wafer which has received the priest's blessing and become the body of Christ, is made to take the place of meat, and is carried in the dish. In this representation, the poet only followed a common

## *The Legend of the Holy Grail.*

belief of his time, which accepted the notion that it was possible for holy persons to be nourished by the host. The dish, the means of conveying this support, would naturally be described as beautiful in ornament, and would also be regarded as possessing sanctity as a relic. The epithet holy would therefore be natural, and might well have been written into the text on the impulse of the moment, as serviceable in the rhythm of the verse. This single word it was, however, which, in the later literature, occasioned the tale to be altered and developed into an elaborate legend of the Holy Grail, the vessel of the eucharist.

According to this view, sword, lance, and dish are mere properties of the literary theatre, applied for stage decoration. The mention of a dish or grail may well have been, not only an incident, but an accident.

That the mention of a sacred vessel is merely incidental is made clear by the ethical purport of the narrative. Crestien's work deals with moral conceptions, presented with astonishing skill, genius, and beauty. A proper understanding will be promoted by two observations, which may be offered as the principal contributions made in this paper to the theory of the poem.

The first remark relates to the proper name of the chief personage. Perceval li Galois, or Perceval the Welshman, has hitherto been understood to signify that the hero belonged to a royal family of Wales. In this manner the epithet was understood by the mediæval successors of the minstrel, and so modern critics have interpreted the appellation.

However, according to the scheme of the author, Perceval is no Welshman. His mother, a Loegrian lady, has only retired to Wales, a land of deserts, for the sake of concealment and security. From the exigencies of the case, the boy uses the dress and arms of Welsh peasants, and for this reason is mistaken as a Welshman. This character, assigned to him by the knights he encounters in the wood, is voluntarily retained by his own choice.

Britons, that is to say, the Celtic population of Great Britain and Brittany, were originally regarded with contempt; but the publication of the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the consequent credit obtained by ancient Britain, as a land of ideal chivalry, altered this feeling. Britons were now named with reverence, and regarded as the authors of romantic poetry. The like credit, however, was not conferred on existing Welshmen. On the contrary, Anglo-Normans considered these as foolish and brutal. In the words of the riders who fall in with Perceval, Welshmen are stupid as cattle. The term *galois*, Welshman, thus came to mean rude and rustic. It is so employed as a term of reproach, even without conveying

## *The Legend of the Holy Grail.*

idea of Welsh nationality. It is with this sense that the word is used by Crestien. Perceval li Galois means Perceval the simple. The name of the hero thus expresses the object of the poem, intended to describe the education of a simple nature.

Bearing this in mind, it will be perceived that the parallels which have been suggested are inapplicable. Thus Mr. Nutt compares the tale with a Scotch-Gaelic narrative of "The Great Fool;" but Perceval is no fool; on the contrary, an exceptionally intelligent youth, whose simplicity, the result of isolation, at once disappears in contact with the world. Any similarity which the French poem may appear to have with folk-tales of this class arises, not from the author of the story, but from alterations and additions made by later modellers who altered a scheme, the intellectual significance of which they did not fully comprehend.

The second observation concerns the part played in the story by the recommendation of silence.

It has been observed that, according to the poet, the essential virtues of chivalry are charity and piety. It is these which are at the outset inculcated by the mother, emphasized by the knightly instructor, and finally repeated by the religious teacher. In the importance assigned to the care of the unprotected and prayer to God, the minstrel had in mind the statement of the apostle concerning pure religion and undefiled, which is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world. Such conduct the poet makes the essence of knightly obligation.

The work is arranged to develop the application of these cardinal principles of action; the love-tale arises from protection of the orphan; the story of the unasked question is made to elucidate the theory of religious obligation.

In addition to the general injunctions mentioned, the preceptor of Perceval lays stress on two specific duties, — mercy and reticence.

The propriety of sparing the fallen is illustrated by an important part in the action. Under circumstances of extreme provocation, the hero twice forbears to take the life of an enemy, whom he contents himself with sending to King Arthur. This clemency, contrary to the spirit of the older heroic poesy, was perhaps an addition of the trouvère to the morality of romance.

Less obvious is the necessity of reserve in speech. The purpose of the author and meaning of his work can be made clear by an incursion into the proverbial philosophy of the Middle Age.

A collection of sententious maxims used as a handbook for the instruction of youth, and familiar to every schoolboy of the twelfth century, was that of Dionysius Cato, whose Latin distichs, rendered into many languages, were universally known.

Cato designates control of the tongue as the first of merits, and as a virtue approved by heaven:—

Virtutem primam esse puta compescere linguam;  
Proximus ille Deo est, qui scit ratione tacere.

In the words of an English translator of the eighteenth century:—

Think it a virtue chief, to speak in season;  
He's next to God, who can hold 's tongue with reason.

The prose condensation of the adage only has: *Magna quidam virtus nostræ est moderatio linguæ.* A great virtue is the government of our tongue.

Translators were apt to think this maxim too sweeping, and to modify the approbation of silence by that of seasonable speech; thus the Anglo-Norman Everard translated the distich so as to make it signify that the man is near to God who knows how when to speak and when to be silent.

La vertu premere  
Ki a tei seit chere  
Est lange refrener;  
A Deu est prochein,  
Ki par resun certain  
Set taisir e parler.

So an Anglo-Saxon renderer, whose version states that it is best before God that one be discreet and able to regulate both his speech and his silence, and to wot when he hath spoken and when he is answered.

The adage is only one of a class of proverbial expressions respecting the relative merits of speech and silence, — a debate forming familiar literary material of the Middle Age, and frequently referred to in the works of our author.

The first of the extant productions of Crestien turns on the same question, whether or not to suppress the free utterance of thought. Enidè, who has fallen into disgrace by open censure of her husband, considers whether she shall further violate his prohibition by warning him of his danger. In her regret for her freedom of language, she represents to herself that no man ever regretted keeping his ideas to himself, while speech would have often been his bane:—

Einz teisirs a home ne nut,  
Mes parlars nuist mainte foiee.

The lines are a paraphrase of a saw, found in a more pithy form in the German Cato:—

Swigen schadet keinen tac,  
Klaffen wol geschaden mac.



*The Legend of the Holy Grail.*

It is a habit of the trouvère, to which sufficient attention, in my opinion, has not been paid, to furnish, in his later works, contrasts and counterparts to preceding compositions. This is the case in the present instance. As in Enidè he portrayed a lady who had practised blunt freedom, in Perceval he described a knight who exhibits excessive reserve. Yet this restraint is not without scruple. Perceval remembers having heard that it was possible to be mute too long, as well as to converse over-much :—

C'ausi bien se puet on trop taire  
Com trop parler a la foie.

Here, again, the poet paraphrases a proverb, which appears in a quatrain of a later Spanish writer, the Rabbi Sem Tob :—

Mal es mucho callar,  
Peor es estar mudo,  
Que non es por callar  
La lengua segunt cudo.

The same rhymers devote a long discussion to the dispute concerning the excellencies of speech and silence. If sages had not taught, disciples would not have existed.

Sy los sabios callaran,  
El saber se perdiera ;  
Sy ellos non ensennaran,  
Deçiplos non uviera.

It is to a French saying answering to this last citation, that Crestien has reference in the first lines of the Erec. The poet excuses himself for venturing to embark on the sea of literature. In his apology, he seems to defend himself against critics who were inclined to rebuke his presumption. After his manner, he answers by a proverb. The *vilain* (clown of the jest-book) saith in his saw that folk scorn things more precious than they guess. If one were silent, he might leave unuttered a thing which would conduce to pleasure if uttered ; therefore every man ought to do his best to use the gift he hath. Such is the retort of the poet, who presently boasts, with good reason, that he has undertaken a work which will endure as long as Christianity.

The proverbial philosophy, in which is discussed the relative advantages of utterance and secrecy, is represented, as above observed, in the lines of Dionysius Cato ; but the latter, a writer of the period of the Antonines (perhaps only a name for a series of proverb-makers), merely gathered sententious sayings, of which, in the second century, some were already ancient. Before Plato, Theognis laid stress on the virtue of measure in speech, as opposed to the cackling of the worthless ; and old saws noted the dinner-hour as an especially

important time for refraining from being a bore. As Cato, in another distich, stated the warning :—

Inter convivas fac sis sermone modestus;  
Ne dicare loquax, dum vis urbanus haberi.

In the words of the English translator :—

Say little at a feast, lest thou be named  
A tattler, whilst thou would be civil famed.

The advice, not to be loquacious lest you be held impolite, is translated in the words put by Crestien into the lips of Perceval's tutor :—

Nus ne puet estre trop parliera,  
Qui sovent tel chose ne die  
Que on li tourne a vilonie.

These comments and parallels will make clear how often the poet had reflected on the ideas involved in the discussion, and how natural it was for the preceptor of the young knight to place the virtue of reticence beside that of clemency.

The man dear to heaven is he who can use measure in speech, says the proverb ; Perceval, an inexperienced lad, has not the knowledge which would enable him to do so. The failure to make inquiry is therefore natural. But is the action more than a jest without serious meaning ? Why punish the well-meaning youth for his inevitable mistake ? The poet knew that this is what Nature does. The best intentions do not save men from the consequences of their defect of wisdom. The tragedy of life is the inability to grasp opportunity.

It is in the nature of achievements required from heroes of romance that they can be accomplished only by the right person. The adventure can be performed only by the perfect knight. Perceval, the rude boy who has broken his mother's heart, is no such ideal deliverer. It is his sin that has sealed his lips. Here, again, the meaning must be read between the lines. The hero may not succeed in his task until a hard education has fitted him for a responsible task. Disappointment is a necessary step in education. Such is the conception, for the sake of which the poem exists.

Of the two cardinal obligations, one has been observed ; even in his misery, the hero has not neglected charity and mercy. But the sense of unmerited hardship, of unjust desertion, induces him to set aside religious emotion. Feeling himself lost and forgotten, on his part he has endeavored to forget. The religious adviser, who, as a third instructor, repeats and reinforces the precepts of the mother and of the tutor in arms, reveals to him that such rebellion has been a mistake of simplicity. The last lesson is the folly of despair, —

he last injunction that conveyed by the pithy English saying, Never too late to mend. The conceptions of duty at the outset of the tale enjoined by the beautiful lines put into the mouth of the mother, at its end are confirmed by the equally lovely verses ascribed to the hermit:—

Encor poras monter en pris,  
S'auras honor et paradis;  
Dieu croi, Dieu aime et Dieu aore;  
Preudome et preudefame honore.

When it is considered that the part of the narrative devoted to Perceval, and every scene it includes, is ingeniously and naturally arranged in such manner as to enforce this series of ideas,—that no incident could have occupied any place other than that assigned, that the future grows out of, and is rendered necessary by, the past,—it seems out of the question that the work of Crestien could have borne any close resemblance to a ruder original. As a consequence, later works which follow the outlines of the action must be considered to owe their existence to the composition of which they are only interpretations.

The Arthurian scenery is obviously a decoration. If in any part of his narrative Crestien followed a folk-tale, such possible ruder antecedent must have undergone a recast so complete as scarce to have remained recognizable.

No doubt the Perceval, in several situations, exhibits the influence of folk-tales. That a hero should arrive at an enchanted castle, find the master of the mansion in straits which he was destined to relieve, and fail in consequence of his wilful ignorance as to the course which he was required to pursue, is a state of things which has a resemblance to the action of certain stories, the origin of which is probably mythologic. But such similarity is remote and indefinite. No particular tale has been pointed out which bears any close analogy to the scenes of Crestien's poem.

It may probably be that the composition is founded, not on any single traditional narrative, but on elements taken from many folk-tales, combined freely for literary purposes. These situations, borrowed from the most various quarters, arranged themselves about the central ideas, as filings about a magnet. The whole of this labor could hardly have been the work of Crestien; he may have had predecessors who worked in a similar spirit, and who brought into a ruder form the story which he altered and elaborated. But the work of such possible forerunners must also have been literary, and distant from anything which could have been contributed by a Cymric reciter.

The affiliation which Irish and Welsh literatures fail to offer is furnished by matter nearer to a Frenchman of the twelfth century.

According to the analysis above given, the main theme of Crestien's tale is the instruction of simplicity. In the beginning of the poem, it is related in what manner the hero is led to follow the profession of arms, from which his mother and guardian has been anxious to deter him, by keeping from his knowledge all particulars respecting knights. In the course of wanderings, he falls in with the very persons from whom he was to have been isolated; in consequence of information thus obtained, he is led to covet the advantages of knighthood, and in the end to pursue the career against which he was to have been protected.

To the general idea of this narration exists a parallel in the famous legend of Barlaam and Josaphat, a Christian recast of the life of Gautama Buddha. In the latter story, a king, after for a long time desiring a male heir, has a son respecting whom it is predicted that one day he shall embrace Christianity. Fearing the accomplishment of this prediction, the child is shut up from the world, in order to prevent him from beholding such human vicissitudes as might incline his will toward asceticism. Arrived at adolescence, the lad is suffered to go abroad, and obtains a view of human suffering, and a consequent knowledge of the certainty of disease and death. The thoughts awakened by the spectacle disturb his peace of mind; in the end, he is instructed in Christian faith by the hermit Barlaam, who obtains admission under the disguise of a merchant.

As the central idea of the legend is to set forth instruction in Christianity, so that of the *Perceval* is to recount education in chivalry; and it would seem necessary to seek no further for the fundamental conception of Crestien.

The *Perceval* opens with a scene, in which the simple youth is made to behold objects of armor and apparel concerning the name and use of which he inquires. (It may be noted that the contrast between the natural curiosity of youth and the self-control of his later reserve constitutes one of the many delicacies of the verse.) The legend of Barlaam also makes mention of a similar incident. The magician Theudas, in order to impress on the king the necessity of employing the influence of woman, relates a story of a youth, who, to be protected from ill-fortune, must be shut up from the sun until the completion of his fifteenth year. At the end of this time he is allowed to observe the splendors of the world. "Here, gold and silver; there, pearls and precious stones; spacious chariots with royal steeds, and, in brief, everything after its rank and class they show the boy. When he inquired what each of these was called, the servants of the king indicated the appellation; but when he anxiously desired to learn the name of women, the sword-bearer

of the king jestingly said : 'These are the demons who seduce men.' Now the heart of the boy, taken by desire, panted for these more than all beside ; wherefore, after everything had been displayed, they bring him back to the king. Then the king demanded of his son what he most loved of the things he had seen. 'What, father !' said he, 'save the demons who seduce mankind ! for of none of those things which have been shown me did my soul so burn as for their friendship.' And the king was amazed at the words of the boy, and saw how tyrannous a thing is the love of women."

This parable, in separate form, became part of the collections of Exempla, or stories pointing a moral, used by the mediæval clergy. In these is developed the trait of inquiry, on the part of a simple-minded youth, into the names and qualities of objects used in the great world. The connection with our tale seems obvious. All that was necessary was a change from women to knights, as the dangerous beings encountered ; and it may be that the Perceval contains an allusion to the legend.

It cannot be supposed that Crestien was the first inventor of the Arthurian story ; he must have been acquainted with some narrative regarding Perceval the Welshman ; but how much such a story contained cannot be conjectured. It is possible that the narrative known to the trouvère may have been of a comic character, and that the seriousness and significance of Crestien's work may have been entirely due to the talent of the poet, who probably recast and completely altered his original.

The origin of the jest which conferred on the hero the epithet of Welshman has already been set forth. The designation points to an Anglo-Norman origin, as only inhabitants of the island of Britain would have been likely to give to a jesting tale a Welsh reference.

The nursery literature of our own day has preserved this habit of ridicule directed against folk of Wales. A familiar rhyme recounts the absurd mistakes of the "three jovial Welshmen" who are represented as hunting on St. David's Day, and who suppose a ship to be a chimneyless house, the moon to be cheese, and so on. An American variant has retained a verse more consonant with the chase. The hunters suppose a horse to be a hornless deer. It cannot be doubted that the ridicule is ancient, perhaps as old as the time of Crestien. The reference, no doubt, primarily was to ignorance of habits and usages of the polite world in the days of chivalry. The verses, therefore, seem to belong to the same root as the narrative which, according to the suggestion, may have been transformed into the beautiful story of the French minstrel.

In the attribution to Welshmen, however, we have only an example of the habit of attaching ridiculous histories to localities and races.

Kindred with the nursery rhyme is a folk-tale recorded by the brothers Grimm, directed against Suabians; and Wolfram of Eschenbach affirms that, in point of stupidity, Bavarians had the reputation of the countrymen of Parzival. Thus the former were made to play a similar unheroic part, and became the point of attachment of the winged seeds of jests, which fly about the world ready to adhere to any convenient object.

The brief examination here offered into the meaning and sources of Crestien's work might have been expanded to much greater length and provided with abundant citations; but it will be more useful, as well as agreeable, to leave these remarks in the form of suggestions.

In a future paper, it may be possible to point out the manner in which, according to the opinion of the writer, ideas and situations supplied by the poem of Crestien came to undergo such alteration as to furnish the basis for a legend of the Holy Grail.

#### NOTES.

See A. Nutt, Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail, with Especial Reference to the Hypothesis of its Celtic Origin, in *Publications of the Folk-Lore Society*, No. xxiii., London, 1888. For mention of later works, including those of G. Paris and W. Golther, consult A. Nutt, *Les derniers travaux allemands sur la légende du saint Graal*, in *Revue Celtique*, 1891; also as appendix to *Folk-Lore*, vol. ii., London, 1891, pp. 1-xlviii.; M. Gaster, *The Legend of the Grail*, *Folk-Lore*, vol. ii. 1891, pp. 50-64, 198-211 (Remarks of A. Nutt, pp. 211-219); R. Heinzel, *Über die französischen Gralromane*, in *Kais. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Classe, Denkschriften*, Vienna, 1892, vol. xl., iii., pp. 91-196.

The work is set down by modern critics, even Golther, as properly to be called a story of the Grail, — *conte del graal*. This appellation is given in the poem attached to the work, the unguineness of which seems to me apparent. Apart from other indications, it may be noted that some of the lines imitate the preface to the *Chevalier de la Charrette*. Crestien was the last person to repeat himself. The occurrence of rhymes and expressions used by the minstrel does not offset the absurdity of the preface, which must have been indited by an imitator, who endeavored to copy the trouvère's style of expression. According to this view, the term *conte del graal* should be discarded.

With regard to the time at which the mother of Perceval is represented as having retired into the desert, it is manifest that this must have been before Arthur's accession; and the parallel given in the adventures of Gauvain, regarding the retreat of Igerne, Arthur's mother, fixes the date as twenty years earlier than the narration. The reference to the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth seems obvious. As to the long passage in which the mother of Perceval is made to give her son an account of the fortunes of his father and brothers, the doubtful genuineness may be left to be determined by the critical editor. Wolfram of Eschenbach must have used a text which represented the lady as a widow at the time of her flight; and such probability coincides with the parallel of Igerne.

Especially to be mentioned is the article of W. Golther, in *Sitzungsberichte der philos.-phil. u. hist. Classe der K. Bayern Akad. d. Wiss.*, Munich, 1890, vol. ii. pp. 174-217, with whose general principles the present writer unreservedly coin-

## *The Legend of the Holy Grail*

cides. Golther sets forth the freely fictitious character of the French romances, the ability of each writer to use the work of his predecessors, and recast at will the material, and the impropriety of citing later stories as if they were independent traditional narratives which can be compared with predecessors of which in reality they are only free and arbitrary transformations. He does not, however, give any analysis of the poem; and, so far as I know, the previous article is the first attempt to expound the significance of the romance from the point of view here adopted, while neither the meaning of the proper name nor the relation of the action to the proverbial literature of the time have before been noted.

The rhyme mentioned as possibly connected with the root of the Perceval was recorded by J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, *Nursery Rhymes of England*, 1840:—

There were three jovial Welshmen,  
As I have heard them say,  
And they would go a-hunting  
Upon St. David's Day.

All the day they hunted,  
And nothing could they find,  
But a ship a-sailing, —  
A-sailing with the wind.

One said it was a ship.  
The other he said, nay;  
The third said it was a house  
With the chimney blown away.

The American rhyme is nearly the same, but a verse recites:—

The one says, "It's a horse,"  
The other he said, nay;  
The one says, "It's a deer,  
But its horns are blown away."

See my *Games and Songs of American Children*, New York, 1883, No. 34, and note; *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. ii. 1890, p. 243.

For the extensive literature of the parable relating to the youth who had never seen a woman, see T. F. Crane, *Exempla of Jacques de Vitry* (in *Publications of Folk-Lore Society*), London, 1890, p. 37, and note; J. Jacobs, *Barlaam and Josephat*, London, 1896, p. lxxxvii. Jacobs observes that the story, occurring in both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, is distinctly a Hindu conception. The notice of the parable above given is after the Greek text of H. Zotenberg, Paris, 1886, p. 125; this Greek form is regarded as the source of western versions, like the Latin of Johannes Damascenus, *Historia de vitis*, etc., Antwerp, 1593, c. xxx.

An Armenian folk-tale, having some affinity with the story of Perceval's departure from home, and subsequent search for his mother, will be found in the following pages of this Journal (pp. 135-142).

## II.

THE *Perceval* of Crestien was followed by a series of romances in which the holy vessel played an important part. In addition to analyses furnished by Birch-Hirschfeld and Nutt, a more elaborate examination has lately been made by Heinzel. Yet it may be useful to give brief accounts of these works, arranged according to a theory of their sequence and relationship which to the writer appears defensible.

### JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA.

A poem relating to Joseph and his race was composed by an author otherwise unknown, who calls himself Robert de Boron. The verse exists only in a single manuscript; a prose recast has had more currency. The story proceeds as follows:—

The precious vessel in which, at the time of the Last Supper, Jesus made his sacrament comes into possession of Pilate, and by him is bestowed on his soldier, Joseph of Arimathæa, who had begged the body of the Saviour. In this vessel Joseph collects the blood of the Redeemer, whose body he lays in the sepulchre. After the report of the Resurrection, the Jews, incensed against Joseph, immure him in a dark tower. Here Jesus Christ appears to Joseph, bringing the vessel, from which proceeds a lustre; the visitor reveals his divinity, and promises to Joseph eternal life; as a reward for service, Joseph shall have in charge the emblem of the death of Christ, which in turn he is to deliver to other keepers. Our Lord then produces the "precious and great vessel, containing the most holy blood which Joseph had collected," and which is to be intrusted to only three persons, a number significant of the Trinity. Joseph receives it kneeling, and is informed that it shall be a means of salvation and repentance to true believers. Never shall be made any sacrament in which shall not be remembered the name of Joseph. This promise Joseph fails to understand, and asks an explanation; God then bestows the desired instruction in solemn words, afterwards referred to as "the great secret named the *Gruail*." The celestial guest then departs, bidding Joseph remain in the prison, from which he shall ultimately be delivered, and where he will receive daily counsel from the Holy Ghost, whose voice will speak with him. Accordingly, during many years Joseph is immured in the tower and lost to the world.

In the time of Titus, emperor of Rome, Vespasian, son of the emperor, is sick of leprosy, and can derive no aid from physicians.



A pilgrim who has visited Judæa brings report of a prophet named Jesus, whom the Jews have put to death, but who possessed miraculous power, and could have healed the prince. An embassy is sent to Judæa to inquire into the story, and, in case the envoys are convinced, to bring back some relic. From Pilate himself, who professes to have acted under duress, the messengers learn the sacred history, and return with the Veronica, or cloth on which Jesus had wiped his face when on his way to the cross, and which has retained his image; by this portrait Vespasian is cured. Titus and Vespasian repair to Judæa, in order to take proceedings against the Jews, who are subjected to examination, and cast on Joseph the responsibility for the life of Jesus. One of the Jews, in consideration of a promise of mercy, reveals the place of imprisonment; Joseph is found safe and well, illuminated by his vessel; he preaches to Vespasian, who is converted; a frightful vengeance is taken on the Jews.

Enygeus (or Eniseus), sister of Joseph, with her husband Hebron (in shorter form, Bron), appeals to Joseph for protection; together with a company of other converts, they accept the Christian faith and are pardoned. Joseph conducts the party into foreign regions, where they abide for a long time. For a season their affairs go prosperously; but in the end, on account of the sin of lust, they suffer from famine. Hebron makes complaint to Joseph, who, according to his custom in emergencies, comes before the vessel, and asks counsel (in virtue of the promise above mentioned). The voice of the Holy Ghost replies, and bids Joseph do a thing which shall have a mystic meaning (*en senefiance grant*): he is to take the vessel containing the blood of God and expose it uncovered to the sinners. For this purpose, in the name of the table of the Supper, Joseph is to prepare a second table, in the centre of which is to be placed the vessel, and opposite a fish, which Hebron is to catch; Joseph himself is to take the seat of Jesus, placing Hebron on his right, and on his left a vacant seat, after the pattern of that vacated by Judas, who had withdrawn, out of shame, in consequence of the words of Christ, that the man who had eaten with him should betray him; this seat would remain unoccupied until it should be filled by an unborn child of Hebron, from his birth destined for the place. After this shall be done, the people are to sit and partake of the grace of our Lord, on condition that they have kept the faith and the commandments.

Joseph does as directed; part of the folk sit and are fed with grace, and obtain the accomplishment of their heart's desire; the rest, who remain standing at a distance, perceive nothing, and are informed by the more fortunate that their delight and refreshment

proceed from the vessel, which suffereth no sinner to remain in its company. The sinners then ask the name of the vessel, and are informed that it will hereafter be termed *Graal*, because it is so agreeable (from *agrter*). Henceforth, at mid-morn, the people who remain daily go before the Graal, and call such attendance "service;" the tale is known as the History of the Grail (*don Graal l'estoire*), and the vessel has since retained the appellation. One of the sinners, Moyses, ventures to take the empty seat, on which the earth opens and swallows him; to Joseph, who makes inquiry before his vessel, it is revealed that the vacant seat shall not be filled until it is occupied by the grandson of Hebron, and that only the latter will be able to disclose the fate of Moyses, who has fallen into the abyss.

Enygeus and Hebron have twelve sons, with respect to whom Joseph, in the usual manner, inquires the divine pleasure; God sends an angel, who brings word that these are to marry, save one, who shall be the master of the rest. The youngest, Alein, declines to wed, and is declared the chieftain of the brothers, and taken into Joseph's own house. The Holy Ghost commands that Joseph shall make Alein acquainted with the history and virtues of the vessel and teach him to abstain from the joy of the flesh; Alein is to proceed to the farthest west, where he will exalt the name of God. On the morrow, when the company is gathered for the daily service, an angel will arrive with a letter from heaven, which is to be placed in charge of Petrus, one of the disciples, to carry whithersoever his heart may incline him to go; this will be to the Vales of Avaron in the west (*es vaus d'Avaron*), there to await the arrival of the unborn son of Alein, who will read to Petrus the letter, and inform the latter respecting the fate of Moyses (presumably as credentials of his trustworthiness); Petrus is then to pass from the world. Joseph gives Alein the instruction required in written form; the author says that to include the whole story would enlarge the present treatise a hundred fold.

On the morrow, the event falls as predicted; the angel brings the letter, and Petrus declares himself ready to proceed "toward the west, which is cruelly savage, the Vales of Avaron." This departure, however, is delayed by another revelation; Petrus is to remain for a day, in order that he may witness the transference to Hebron of the holy vessel and its authority. On account of the fish he caught, Hebron will be known as the Rich Fisher, and his fame will ever increase; like the rest, he will be attracted to the Occident, where, in any spot he may elect, he is to wait the arrival of the grandson, to whom he is finally to surrender "the vessel and the grace;" thus will be complete the trio of possessors, emblematic of

**the Trinity.** When all is accomplished, Joseph is to depart into everlasting joy; "thou and thy heirs and thy line, all that is born of thy sister, will be safe, and they who know how to tell the story will be loved and cherished, of all folk the most honored."

On the next day, at the service, Joseph relates the divine revelations, and puts the whole history into writing, save the secret words of Christ in the prison, which he leaves unrecorded, but orally communicates to Hebron only; the latter is put in possession of the vessel, and after three days goes his way to the (unnamed) country in which he was born, while Joseph remains behind.

An epilogue recites that no person will be able to complete the tale unless he can recite the fortunes of Alein, Petrus, Moyses, and the Rich Fisher; this no man can do, unless he has previously become acquainted with the greater history of the Grail. The writer declares his intention, at more leisure, to finish the story.

In the curious work, of which an account has been given, the author falls into frequent inconsistencies and contradictions. The promised occupant of the empty seat is mentioned first as the son (2533), then as the grandson (2795) of Alein; the extended history of the Grail, to which he refers as his authority, is said to have been written, first by great scholars (934), then by Joseph himself; Joseph, again, is made to write the narrative twice over, at first for Alein (3157), afterwards for Hebron (3418); the secret words of Christ in the prison are mentioned as included in the book (935), afterwards as only orally delivered (3413). The celestial letter is read by Joseph to Petrus (3112); presently we are told that the latter is only to become acquainted with its contents through hearing them read by the heir of Alein (3132). The vessel is to be exhibited to the sinners uncovered (*tout à dcouvert*, 2472); but it is shortly described as covered with a towel (2508). These incongruities appear to me to be the result of the carelessness of an author inventing with free hand, writing *currente calamo*, and disinclined to take the trouble of correcting his composition, with an eye to consistency.

A connection with the "matter of Britain" is not distinctly stated; yet there can be no doubt that the reader is expected to understand Britain by the unnamed western country in which the actors of the drama are hereafter to meet. The "Vales of Avaron" may be a corruption for the Isle of Avalon, whither, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth and French romancers, the wounded Arthur retired. Avalon, for half a century, had been identified with Glastonbury; of this association the present work shows no trace. The writer, at the close of his poem, speaks of the tale of the "Good Fisher," or

"Rich Fisher," as famous in his day (3457); he probably had in mind the Perceval of Crestien. Whether he expected the reader to understand that the grandson of Alein, the destined occupant of the empty seat, was to be Perceval, appears to my mind doubtful. In this case he must have been poorly informed respecting the history of Arthur, who would thus be placed in the third generation from the Christian era, or the end of the first century instead of the fifth. It is not at all intelligible how the missionary Alein can have been meant to figure as a knight representing the duties of chivalry, such as must have been the father of Perceval, whose mother is averse to have him follow the same career. The poet says that persons enjoying the grace of the vessel could not be maimed in their limbs (3052); this was precisely the case with the Fisher King, possessor of the Grail in Crestien's romance. As the whole tone of the poem is religious, and partakes of the ideas and style of Christian apocrypha, it seems highly improbable that the author had any idea of representing the destined possessor of the empty seat in the character of a Knight of the Round Table. The real purposes of the writer are likely to remain obscure.

For his scenery, it has been shown that the poet was indebted to an apocryphal gospel, well known in his day. The imagination of an oriental Christian of the second century had furnished fictitious testimony to the truth of sacred history, in the form of a narrative professing to be the translation of Jewish documents contemporary with the proceedings before Pilate, and subsequent events down to the Ascension. This record, together with an addition of later date, relating to the descent of Christ into Hades, was familiar to the Middle Age under the title of the Evangel of Nicodemus. Concerning Joseph of Arimathæa, this composition relates that on the day of the Crucifixion he was confined by the Jews in a guard-house; at the sixth hour in the evening (the time of the death of the Redeemer), the house having been suspended by the four corners, the Saviour appears to Joseph, with a dazzling light, and reveals himself as that very Jesus whom Joseph had laid in the tomb. As a condition of belief, Joseph asks to be shown the sepulchre, to which he is guided by his divine visitor, who leaves Joseph in his own house, bidding him not issue for forty days.

As an offshoot from this root, was composed the Latin book entitled "*Vindicta Salvatoris*," in which the vengeance of Christ on the Jews is described after the spirit of a barbarian blood-feud. Titus, a prince of Aquitaine, is healed of a tumor through faith in Jesus, whom he has never seen, but heard of through Nathan, a Christian traveller. Desirous to signalize his new allegiance to the Prince of Peace, Titus invites his friend Vespasianus, a prince of

the country, to join him in an expedition which answers to a crusade. The two cross the sea, arrive at Jerusalem, and smite the population with the edge of the sword, destroying the survivors with frightful tortures. At this time the emperor Tiberius is sick of leprosy; the victors announce their success, begging him to send a legate with authority; Velosianus is commissioned, who obtains from Veronica (the woman healed of a bloody flux) the cloth containing the portrait, which with his own hands Jesus had painted at her request, in order to serve as a memorial. By this relic Tiberius is healed and embraces Christianity, having been instructed by the same Nathan, who had informed Titus. The work contains mention of the fortunes of Joseph, as already related.

Robert de Boron appears to have confused the Titus and Vespasianus of the treatise with Roman emperors of the same names, and thus was led to delay the deliverance of Joseph until the day of Vespasian. Possibly an earlier composition may have existed, in which this misapprehension had already been made; it may have contributed to this version of the history of Joseph, that a confusion arose with Josephus Flavius, actually connected with Vespasian (Heinzel, p. 106). However this may have been, it may probably have been Robert himself who substituted the Grail, instead of the sepulchre, as the attestation calculated to convince doubt exhibited by Christ to Joseph, an alteration dependent on the symbolical ideas presently to be elucidated.

The essential idea of Robert's poem relates, not to the apocryphal Christian history above explained, but to ideas associated with the religious ceremonial of the writer's own time.

In his "*Gemma Animæ*," a work composed in the first half of the twelfth century, Honorius of Autun undertook to expound the symbolism of the ceremony of the mass; in this treatise, respecting the eucharistic cup he says: "The same chalice, whatever its material, is in a mystery that which Christ held in his hands. The Scripture calleth it Testament, because by this is confirmed the legacy of a deceased person. The new and eternal testament is written for us in the blood of Christ, by whose death the celestial kingdom is secured as our inheritance. By a mystery is meant, that one thing is expressed, and other thing understood" (i. 106).

The allusion to a testament of course refers to the cup (*calix*) which Jesus took and gave to his disciples, saying, according to the rendering of the Vulgate: *Hic est enim sanguis novi testamenti, qui pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum* (Matthew, xxvi. 28).

In another chapter, Honorius describes the corporal as a cloth of linen, pure white, folded in such manner as to exhibit neither beginning nor end, on which is set the oblate of unleavened bread, in the

form of a denarius and stamped with the image of the Lord. He proceeds (i. 46) :—

“When are said the words *per omnia sæcula sæculorum*, the deacon comes, raises the cup before him (the priest), puts on the cover, replaces it on the altar, and covers it with the corporal, representing Joseph of Arimathæa, who deposited the body of Jesus Christ, covered his face with the sweat-cloth, laid in the tomb, sealed with the stone. Here the oblate and chalice are covered with the corporal, which signifies the pure winding-sheet in which Joseph wrapt the body of Christ. The chalice designates the sepulchre; the plate the stone which closed the sepulchre.”

The act to which Honorius refers is that which follows the consecration of the cup and precedes the oblation; that is, to the crowning moment of the celebration, when the deacon presents the priest with the cup now containing the blood of God.

Anciently the chalice and paten were presented at the same time; the priest received the cup with the paten, elevated to his breast, bowed, and made the oblation (E. Martene, *De antiquis ecclesiæ ritibus*, Antwerp, 1764, vol. iv. p. 58, § 19).

In the romance we read, as the “secret words” recited to Joseph in the prison, by God himself: “Joseph, thou knowest that in the house of Simon I ate, and all my companions, on Thursday, at the supper; there I blest the bread and wine, I told them that they should eat my flesh and drink my blood; in this manner shall be represented this table in many a land. That thou didst take me from the cross and lay me in the sepulchre, is the altar on which they who sacrifice me shall place me. The cloth in which I was enveloped shall be called corporal. This vessel in which thou didst put my blood, shall be named chalice (*calices*). The plate which thereon shall lie shall signify the stone sealed over me, when thou didst put me in the sepulchre. Thou oughtest to know, these things are emblems (*sequeñces*), which shall be done in memory of thee. All who shall behold this vessel, shall be in my company; they shall have their heart’s wish, and joy everlasting. Those who shall be able to understand these words and retain them, will be virtuous in the sight of men, and more acceptable before God; they cannot be misjudged in court, nor cheated of their right, nor vanquished in trial by battle, if their cause is just” (i. 893-928).

In writing these words, it would seem obvious that the poet must have in mind the passage of Honorius, of which the lines are in considerable measure a paraphrase; it is not clear that a particular act of the ritual is referred to, as in the words of Honorius; yet it is not easy to see how it would have been possible to state more

clearly that the vessel is synonymous with the cup of the sacrament. The advantages claimed for the use of this cup are entirely in accordance with mediæval ideas respecting the protective influence of the eucharist.

The same significance appears in the remainder of the story, or rather allegory. That the Grail is placed in the middle of the table, with a fish opposite, is a thinly disguised description of the relative arrangement of the chalice and paten, which in the mass are placed on the altar, the first on the right, the second on the left (Martene, op. cit. iv. 57, § 18). The fish here answers to the paten containing the body of Christ; this significance of the fish, as typifying the body of the Redeemer partaken in the Supper, is ancient, the pictures of the Catacombs at Rome supplying numerous illustrations; the symbol, though explained as an anagram of the initial letters of the titles of Jesus, probably is an inheritance from pre-Christian Oriental usage. The Rich Fisher is therefore a proper person to represent the priest, who has the power of distributing the body of God. The "secret" of the Grail is the part of the service for the priest alone (*secretæ*, Martene, iv. 50, § 7); that the words relating the internal meaning of the sacramental rite are for the ear of Alein, refers to the same privilege. The involution of the Grail by Joseph is also a ritual act, the cup being enveloped in the corporal (Martene, iv. 58). That physical sustenance may be imparted by the rite was a mediæval conception already referred to in the romance of Crestien; this bodily nourishment, again, is a sign of spiritual feeding with the bread of angels. Participation in the communion must be preceded by a confession of faith; that sinners are compelled to withdraw, and the fate of him who occupied the empty seat, refers to the danger incurred by impure persons in approaching the divinized elements. Reference to the virtue of the vessel, as conferring salvation from sins (882), alludes to the remission of sins mentioned in the words of consecration. Finally, it is expressly declared that the vessel is the chalice.

It seems, therefore, that the poem presents a consistent representation of the virtues of the sacramental cup; Robert must have expected his readers to picture the holy vessel under the usual form of the chalice. He must, however, have been aware that the common Romance term, *graal*, dish, did not lend itself to such explanation. It may, I think, have been for this reason that he avoids using the word until he is able to represent the designation *Graal* as a proper noun, a name of the chalice, explained by its possession of an independent derivation not belonging to the familiar designation of a dish. Such ingenious arrangement implies invention on the part of the author; Robert was evidently enthusiastic over his

idea ; like interest is found only among possessors of an original conception ; I should suppose, therefore, that it is to Robert that belonged the idea of representing the vessel as the cup of the sacrament.

According to what has been said, the following may be thought a rational hypothesis concerning the relation of Robert to his predecessor. After the publication of the *Perceval* of Crestien, curiosity was awakened by the enigmatical manner in which the sacred dish, containing the host, is introduced into his narrative ; this interest may have led to various efforts at elucidation. Not long after the appearance of Crestien's work, and while this curiosity was at its height, it occurred to Robert that a legend could be constructed, in which the Grail, which had by this time come to be used as a proper name in connection with the story of the Fisher, might be explained as the chalice of the eucharist ; this notion was carried out in a story of his own invention, on the basis of suggestions obtained from the apocryphal work mentioned. Whether the author had any intention of continuing his story it is impossible to conjecture ; it may well be that he designed only to compose an introduction connecting the vessel with Christian symbolism. He may have been acquainted with the poem of Crestien only by rumor, and have had no distinct idea, either of its contents or of Arthurian history. If he had made an attempt to continue the narrative, it is fair to suppose that he would have continued to use the legendary style in which the poem is written. The *Joseph*, therefore, must be taken by itself, as having no distinct relation to previous compositions connected with the holy vessel.

According to this view, Robert must have expected his readers to conceive of the Grail as the cup of the sacrament ; but if so, this representation was not comprehended by the romancers who came after him. In the *Queste del Saint Graal* the vessel is explained as the dish holding the Paschal Lamb, and in a passage of the *Merlin*, perhaps interpolated (see below), as that in which Jesus and the Apostles ate at the Supper. In a mention hereafter to be noticed, the chronicler Helinandus says : "At this time, in Britain, was shown to a certain hermit, by means of an angel, a marvellous vision relating to Joseph, a noble decurion, who took down from the cross the body of the Lord, and concerning that *catinus* or *paropsis*, in which the Lord supped with his disciples, regarding which has been indited by the same hermit the history called *gradale*. Now *gradalis* or *gradale*, in the French tongue, signifies a dish wide and somewhat deep, in which at the tables of the rich are wont to be served costly viands *gradatim*, one delicacy after another in different courses. In common speech it is also entitled *greal*, because it is *grate* and



acceptable to him who eateth therein, as well on account of the containing vessel, made perhaps of silver or other precious material, as by reason of the thing contained, that is to say the successive variety of expensive food. This history I have been unable to find in Latin, but in French only it is possessed by certain noblemen, nor, as is said, is it easy to be found in its entirety." On the authority of these explanations, modern writers have assumed that in the account of Robert, the Grail represents the vessel mentioned in Matthew xxvi. 23, reciting, according to the common English version: "And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me." Here the Vulgate renders the Greek *τροχίλιον*, dish, by *paropsis*. The forms of the ware denoted by the various scriptural terms are not capable of precise determination; the vessel held liquid; perhaps the English word sauce-pan would furnish the best rendering. As to the contents, it seems to be admitted that the food served in the dish was the *charoseth*, or ritual sauce composed of figs, dates, and similar fruits, with vinegar, the red color of which is said to have symbolized the hue of the bricks of Egypt. This sauce seems also to have had non-ritual use, and presumably had made part of an ordinary meal, and so came to be employed with a mystical interpretation in the festival which had originated as a repast dedicatory of the fruits of the year. In dipping the bread, the feasters only followed the usual habit of the Orient, a custom preserved to modern times. The corresponding passage, Mark xiv. 20, makes Jesus reply to questions concerning the traitor: "It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish." From the latter mention, it has been assumed that Judas reclined near Jesus, and that the vessel, employed by two persons occupying contiguous places, was only one of many similar dishes placed upon the table. The fathers of the church seem to have comprehended the description as concerned with customs of eating still familiar; at all events, I am not aware that these laid any stress on the *paropsis*, or that this vessel has played any part in ecclesiastical symbolism. It was only from such symbolic use that Robert could have been led to think of the dish, and in the absence of such suggestion it is fairly to be assumed that he also did not have in his mind the passage in question. By no possible stretch of metaphor could he have spoken of the dish of Judas as "the vessel in which Christ made his sacrament" (396), or as receiving the blood of God. On the other hand, the successors of the poet, who were not especially interested in the symbolism which in his composition had been all-important, but who were first of all story-tellers, had before them also the narrative of Crestien, in which the vessel was described as a dish, conformably to the usual meaning of the word *grail*; it is therefore not

surprising that, by way of misinterpretation, these made the vessel represent the dish from which the apostles had eaten ; but even so, it does not appear that they had any distinct idea of connecting the Grail with the dish used by Jesus and Judas, a reference only suggested by the passage of Helinandus.

It is true that a chief function of the Grail, as described by Robert, was to separate the sinners from the righteous, and that such severance is illustrated by the parallel case of Judas. But in the Biblical narrative, the use of the dish had been previous to the words of Jesus, by which Judas is induced to withdraw, and participation in the food is mentioned only as a means of recognition. With this Robert agrees, making Jesus say : "And I said that he ate with me, who would betray my person. He who knew he had done this was ashamed, and drew back from me" (2479-2483). On the other hand, while Judas actually did use the *paropsis*, sinners are unable to approach the Grail. It therefore seems clear, that in the romance the withdrawal of the offenders is ascribed, not to the influence of the dish in which Judas had dipped his hand, but to a different vessel, the cup of the new testament ; the representation is explained by the existence of a general belief respecting the danger which persons in mortal sin incurred by approaching the eucharist.

For these reasons, I should acquit Robert of a confusion which would reduce his poem to nonsense, and give him credit for an original and consistent representation of the Grail as the cup of the Last Supper, attributing the identification with the dish of Judas to the misapprehension of subsequent romancers. Such relation would be normal, for in this cycle, it is found that each successive author, in his efforts at originality, misconceives and perverts the ideas borrowed from his predecessor.

The error (as I think) of the mediæval writers has been followed by all modern scholars who have had occasion to treat the subject: Zarncke, Birch-Hirschfeld, Nutt, Heinzel. They have been influenced by an expectation of the consistency of works which are a tissue of misconceptions and contradictions. If the explanation here offered finds favor, Robert will obtain the credit of an original and consistent allegory, and the blame for the confusion will fall on his imitators.

It has been supposed that some indication of date is furnished by the epilogue. A Gautier de Montbéliard went to the Holy Land in 1201, where he died in 1214. Hence it has been concluded that Robert, if he wrote in company of this Gautier, must have composed before 1201. Granting this to be the case, it is not clear why it should be presumed that the poem may not have been written many years earlier than 1201, as its relation to other works

of the cycle will hereafter be shown to imply. But it is not plain that such is the interpretation of the enigmatical lines of the epilogue, which appears to me to exhibit marks of unguineness, and I think, therefore, that no attention is to be paid to this indication, in determining the date of the work.

In spite of deficiencies of historical knowledge, the Joseph exhibits no small literary merit, as is usual in the case of compositions that have made much impression. The style is easy and graceful, the verse flowing and musical, and the ideas often pleasing, as witness the following lines (31-44) respecting the Virgin : —

Dedenz la Virge s'aümbra,  
 Tele com la voust la fourma,  
 Simple, douce, mout bien aprise,  
 Toute la fist à sa devise.  
 Pleine fu de toutes bontez :  
 En li assist toutes biautez,  
 Ele est fleiranz come esglentiers ;  
 Ele est ausi com li rosiers,  
 Qu'ele porta la douce rose  
 Qui fu dedenz sen ventre enclose.  
 Ele fu Marie apelée,  
 De touz biens est esluminee ;  
 Marie est dite, mer amere ;  
 Fille dieu est, si est sa mere.

"Within the Virgin did he shadow himself forth ; such as he desired he formed her ; simple, sweet, well instructed, wholly he fashioned according to his device. Full was she of all goodness, in her was seated all beauty ; flowering she is as eglantine, she is also like the rose-tree, seeing that in herself she beareth the sweet rose that was included in her womb. She was called Mary, with all goods is she illuminate ; Mary, it meaneth, sea of bitterness ; daughter of God she is, his mother also."

The story of Crestien, a romance of the most chivalric type, was thus followed by a religious poem of a character as opposite as possible. Each of these tales being incomplete, each required continuation ; the remainder of the evolution of the legend consisted in a series of attempts at concording the ideas and situations of two inconsistent works ; successive writers of fiction, working in a spirit of invention as free as that of modern novelists, reconstructed, expanded, and harmonized, with absolute indifference to the intentions of predecessors, whom they were at all times ready to use, but equally prepared to misinterpret, confuse, and contradict, when by so doing they could produce an original effect, and attain the only end dear to them, the effective presentation of their own situations and ideas.

MERLIN.

As a continuation of the Joseph was written a poem relating to the life of Merlin, in which the history was carried from the birth of Merlin to the coronation of Arthur ; of the poem only a fragment survives, but the entire romance is preserved in a prose reworking. The material was obtained from the " *Historia Regum Britanniae* " of Geoffrey of Monmouth, expanded and varied by additions due to two generations of French minstrels. The romance contains a passage in which the Round Table of King Arthur is brought into connection with the Grail, being explained as made in imitation of that of the Last Supper (" *Merlin*," ed. G. Paris and J. Ulrich, Paris, 1886, vol. i pp. 94-97).

Merlin advises Uter Pendragon (father of Arthur) to do a thing which will be to his advantage, at the same time desiring secrecy. The king promises to follow his wishes, whereon Merlin briefly mentions the story of Joseph of Arimathæa, the famine which fell on his company, and the table he made, according to the pattern of that at which sat Christ and his Apostles. " And by this vessel was parted the society of the good and the bad. Sir, he who could sit at this table had the accomplishment of his heart. Sir, at this table was always an empty seat, which signifies the place where Judas sat at the Supper, and when he heard what Our Lord said on his account, was parted from the company of God. And his place was empty, saving that our Our Lord seated a man in his stead to make up the number of the twelve Apostles. And this folk call the vessel, whence they have this grace, *Graal*. And if you will trust me, you will establish the third table in the name of the Trinity. By these three tables the Trinity signified three virtues. And I assure you that if you do this, it will greatly advantage your soul and body." It is agreed that the plan shall be carried out in Carlisle at Pentecost. Merlin makes the table, and at Pentecost chooses fifty knights to occupy the seats, with the exception of that left vacant. After the festival, the knights have become so much attached to each other, that they refuse to separate, expressing a desire to spend their lives together ; in this way is established the Table of King Arthur. The king is anxious to know who is to occupy the empty place ; Merlin replies : " So much I may say, that it shall not be filled in thy time. And he who will fill it will be born from one who ought to engender him. And he hath not yet taken wife, nor knoweth that he must do so. And it will be necessary, first of all, for the man who is to fill it, to accomplish that place, before which sitteth the vessel of the Grail, which those who guard it have never seen accomplished ; which will not befall in thy time,

but in that of the king who shall succeed." Merlin, praying the king hereafter to hold his chief court in Carlisle, then departs, and retires into Northumberland to join Blaise (the confessor of Merlin's mother), to whom he "relates these things, and this establishment of the table, and much more which you will hear in his book."

It will be observed that in this passage the symbolism becomes confused. In the Joseph the empty seat is before the Grail, the chalice containing the blood of God, which can be approached only by the pure; in the Merlin, besides this vacant place, a second unoccupied seat is made at the Round Table, where the Grail is not present; yet this board is mentioned as the third table of the sacrament. The duplication of the idea is what would be expected of an imitator, who, as in this cycle invariably is the case with copyists, perverts the idea of his original. In minor points, also, the narration varies; the number three is said to represent three virtues, instead of the Trinity; the word *Graal* is connected with *grace*, instead of with *agréer*.

However, the romance has been set down as the work of Robert de Boron, and is so indicated in the title of the edition of Paris and Ulrich, nor has any objection been raised against the attribution; it is, therefore, with deference that I would suggest the difficulties in the way of such ascription.

That the work, in the manuscripts, immediately follows the Joseph, constitutes no ground for assumption of common authorship, seeing that such position is adequately accounted for by the consideration that the Merlin, whoever may have been the author, was written for the purpose of continuing the Joseph.

The romance does not profess to be the work of Robert; on the contrary, while the Joseph professes to depend on a history of the Grail, written by Joseph of Arimathæa himself, the Merlin pretends to be founded on the story of a mythical Blaise, a contemporary of Merlin.

The action of the Joseph is placed in the first century; that of the Merlin belongs to the fifth. The writer of the first seems to have had no definite idea of Arthurian story; the author of the second employed the account of Geoffrey of Monmouth.

The conceptions of the first move in the circle of ideas of Christian apocrypha, those of the second belong to secular history; those of the former deal with ecclesiastical symbolism, of the latter with the adventures belonging to the matter of Britain.

The style of the poetic fragment of the Merlin appears to me different from that of the Joseph; the rhythm of the former writer is fluent and melodious, that of the latter harsh and formal; the one contains many pleasing lines, the other no agreeable collocation;

the first occupies less than thirty-five hundred lines, the latter must have extended to a compass three times as great.

For these reasons I regard the Merlin as the work of a new hand, writing presumably not long after the composition of the Joseph, which work he undertook to continue, and made an essential addition to the legend, connecting the holy vessel with Arthurian story by associating it with the Round Table.

#### NOTES.

*Epilogue to the Joseph.* After the end of the story, with the words, "And Joseph remained" (*Et Joseph si est demourez*), follows an epilogue of about fifty lines (3461-3514). "Messires Roberz de Boron" affirms that those who profess to be able to relate the story must be capable of reciting four things; namely, the adventures of Alein, Petrus, Moyses, and the Rich Fisher; with respect to the latter, it will be necessary to recount where he journeyed, where he halted, and the arrival of "him who ought to go" (the son of Alein, destined to occupy the empty seat). These four parts no man can bring together unless he has heard related the greater history of the Grail (*Don Graal la plus grant estoire*), which without doubt is veritable. "At the time I treated of it (*je la retreis*), with my lord Gautier, in peace, who was of Mont-Belyal (Monbeliart, in prose version), the great history of the Grail had never been treated by any man who was mortal; but I notify all men, who shall possess this book, that if God gives me life and health, I intend to conjoin these parts, if I am able to write them out (*se en liure les puis trouver*). As I omit a part, which I do not now treat, it will be necessary to relate the fifth part (the Joseph) and forget the four until at more leisure I can return to the subject and deal with them myself, each separately; but if now I leave them, learned men will suppose them lost, and be unable to conjecture with what mystical intent (*en quele senefiance*) I had separated them." Gautier de Montbeliard went to the Holy Land in 1201, and did not return, dying in 1212 (Merlin, ed. by Paris and Ulrich, p. ix. note). Hence the editor supposes that Robert had made a first edition of his poem when companion of this lord, before 1201, and in a second edition, after 1212, added the epilogue. But this is not the only nor most obvious interpretation of the epilogue, which might signify that Robert had originally written a fuller (*plus grant*) history of the Grail, of which in the Joseph he began a briefer and more popular version; and it is not to be denied that the literal sense appears to favor this rendering, and that the epilogue appears intended to pass as belonging to a first, not a second, edition. In this case the forgery would be obvious, a supposition corroborated by the apologetic tone and confused style of the lines. These may have been added by an editor who disapproved of works such as the Merlin circulating as continuations of the Joseph. Concerning the first three parts of the proposed continuation, there is no evidence that such works were ever written, nor is it likely that had they existed the data would have been entirely lost; the Perceval, ascribed to Robert de Boron, relates the history of the son of Alein, but not the wanderings and residence of Hebron, and therefore fails to answer to the sketch of the fourth part; while the Merlin, passing for a direct continuation of the Joseph, has no place in the scheme. Such inconsistency certainly favors the supposition of the unguineness of the epilogue.

*Merlin.* The edition of G. Paris and J. Ulrich, Paris, 1886, is based on the Huth MS.; but the editors have included, between brackets, certain additions, taken from other MSS. considered to furnish a better text.

In one of the sentences of the passage concerning the Grail, these additions make important alterations in the sense. "And Our Lord commanded him to make a table in the name of the Supper (and it was quite square) (*et tot fust carrée*), and a vessel he had (where Jesus and the Apostles ate at the Supper), he set on this table (when he had covered it well) with white cloths (and he covered it wholly) except in front of him." If the bracketed words are to be accepted, the author conceived of the Grail as the dish in which Judas dipped his hand, or the *paropsis*. However, the trait here added to the account of the Joseph, that the sacramental vessel is uncovered in front of the officiating personage, seems obviously to relate to the ceremonial practice of the mass. The writer could hardly have added this trait unless he thought of the Grail as a cup; hence the bracketed phrase appears to me an interpolation. It is also to be noticed that if the full text is to be accepted as representing the Merlin, then the latter could not have been written by Robert; for the description of the table as square (*carrée*), shows that the author borrowed from the prose recast of the Joseph, in which alone this shape is mentioned, and not from the poem (see G. Weidner, *Der Prosaroman von Joseph von Arimathia*, 1024).

### III.

THE examination of stories belonging to the cycle may be continued by some account of French romances, in which, as in the incomplete poem of Crestien, Perceval is made the hero of the narration.

#### CONTINUATORS OF CRESTIEN.

Several long poetical compositions are preserved, in which courtly poets undertook to complete Crestien's unfinished tale. There seems to me no reason to believe that any of these makers of verse possessed information regarding the history other than the suggestions offered by their original. For their matter they depended on commonplaces of the romantic poetry of their time, eked out by an abundant exercise of individual ingenuity, each successive writer freely utilizing, embroidering, and recombining the situations depicted by his predecessors.

In the printed edition, these supplements were united with Crestien's poem in such manner as apparently to form a homogeneous work, and reproduced in an uncritical text abounding with interpolations and confusions.

(1.) *First continuator.* Crestien left incomplete adventures relating to Gawain (to use English spelling); an anonymous romancer carried on the doings of this hero. His work, devoid of psychological interest, moves on the usual level of fiction devoted to knightly exploits; the production, however, possesses some interest from the consideration that the author made use of certain tales already familiar in Arthurian fiction, and that the outlines of his plots, in these cases, seem not so completely recast by free imagination as is usual with writings of this cycle.

Among these stories may be mentioned the concluding episode (lines 20,843-21,916) relating to Carahes (the Gaherys of Malory), a brother of Gawain. While Arthur is holding court at Carlisle a boat appears, drawn by a swan, and containing the body of a slain knight, the lance-head still inserted in the wound; a letter requests that the burial may be postponed for a year, in order that opportunity may be given for the extraction of the fragment; the knight who succeeds in this essay will be under obligation to avenge the blood of the deceased. Carahes touches the weapon, which of itself falls into his hand, and consequently feels himself bound to set off as knight errant in quest of an enemy of whose name and residence he is ignorant. At this time the hero is pledged to return to a certain garden, where he had been vanquished by a dwarf, who has



bound him to reappear at the end of a year; he fulfils the engagement, this time vanquishes the dwarf, and also subsequently jousts with the dwarf's master, using the spear-head mentioned; in the encounter the adversary of Carahes is struck down with a wound of the same character as that which he himself had inflicted on the knight of the swan-boat, this antagonist being that very murderer of whom Carahes is in search. A damsel who happens to be present recognizes the lance-head as formerly the property of her own lover, the unfortunate swan-knight; this personage is named as Brangemur, son of Brangepart, the (fairy) queen of a solitary isle, and of her mortal lover, Guingamor (a name variously spelled); the poet speaks of the tale of Guingamor as famous in his day. Of this lay a version has survived ("*Romania*," vol. viii. 1879, p. 50); the extant tale is apparently a variant of that known to the continuator, and does not contain the name of the fairy mistress. The story, of the Rip Van Winkle type, relates to the experience of a knight who has been resident in a fairy palace for three days, as he supposes, but in reality for three hundred years; such a history has been related in numerous European forms, and in all probability was familiar throughout Europe, in many variations, at the time of the continuator. A later writer, author of the prologue to be mentioned, seems to have known a different or modified version of the tale of the swan-boat, seeing that he places the scene at Glamorgan; he regards the fiction as a "branch" of the Grail history.

In spite of the remotely mythical character which belongs to certain incidents of the account, this fantastic narrative bears obvious marks of recent elaboration, and cannot, as seems to me, be regarded otherwise than as the composition of French romancers contemporary with the continuator, and as the product of their unbridled fancy, which, after the time of Crestien, overflowed all limits. The idea of the swan-bark may probably have been borrowed from a French tale, then well known, but which has been preserved only in later forms, *The Chevalier au Cygne*. The traditional element of the adventure seems to have consisted in a popular belief, of which traces elsewhere appear, that the weapon which has been instrumental in causing a death ought to be preserved, probably on account of the superstitious belief that it would be found potent in the vengeance. The figure of the dwarf (originally a demonic power), who requires a knight whom he has encountered to meet him a second time at the expiration of a year, was a genuine element of popular fiction, but is here introduced from other tales (one such narrative recited by the continuator himself) and has undergone a recast which obscures primary significance.

A section of this continuation (lines 19,637-20,375) deals with the

Legend of the Grail, and makes Gawain arrive at the castle of the Roi Pescéour, or Fisher King, just as in the poem of Crestien Perceval had done. While King Arthur and his court are encamped in the forest, an armed knight passes, who fails to accost the queen (the idea is borrowed from Crestien's Erec). The seneschal Kex (Kay) having failed in an attempt to bring in the knight, that task is intrusted to Gawain, whom the stranger voluntarily follows (the model is the narration of Crestien's Perceval). The knight, while thus under the protection of Arthur's nephew, is shot by an arrow directed by an invisible hand (it is hinted that Kex is the author of the misdeed); before leaving the world, the knight makes a last request, that Gawain shall don his armor and ride his steed, in order to fulfil a task, respecting which he supplies no additional information. Accordingly, Gawain pursues his way, riding he knows not whither, and on his route passes a chapel, in which a light is extinguished by a black hand. (It afterwards appears that this extinction is an emblem of the death of one of the race of the Fisher; the poet declines to explain the occurrence, remarking that it is characteristic of the Grail that the story must be related only as "it ought to go," line 19,940). The hero rides all night and all the following day (through Normandy and Brittany, says the text, doubtless corrupt; the scene is laid on the marches of Britain). At last he reaches the sea, and enters an avenue overarched by boughs (the notion is copied after the journey of Yvain in Crestien's *Chevalier au Lion*); he proceeds in this direction until midnight. At last he reaches a hall full of people, who on account of his costume at first take him for their master, but perceive their error when he is disarmed. Those present quit the hall; bearers enter, carrying a bier on which is laid the body of a knight, upon whose breast lies the fragment of a sword; clergy follow in procession (the account is modelled after the funeral scene in Crestien's poem relating to Yvain). The company depart, leaving behind the bier; Gawain sees a crowned knight, who calls for water, and a banquet is served; in place of seneschal and butler, the rich Grail in many courses performs the service, supplying the tables with food and wine; when the king commands the board to be removed, the supper vanishes. Gawain, left to himself, sees only the bier and a lance, from which drips blood, flowing through a golden tube into a silver cup. The king reappears, carrying the sword brought by Gawain, which is only the other half of that resting on the body of the knight drawn by the swan. (It is now perceived that the knight whose armor Gawain had donned was bound on an errand of vengeance; according to the idea of the vengeful weapon already noted, the person to be avenged being the lord now about to be

interred, who had been slain with the sword broken in the stroke, carried by the avenger of blood, and from him taken by Gawain.) The king requires his guest to reunite the pieces of the sword, declaring that under no other condition will he be able to succeed in his task. Gawain makes inquiry about the lance, and is informed that it is that with which the Son of God had been wounded in the side, and which will bleed until the Day of Judgment. As the latter stroke had caused inestimable gain, so another blow (that by which the nameless lord had been slain) has brought about terrible loss, seeing that thereby the kingdom of Logres (*i. e.* Loegria, England) and the whole country had been destroyed. While listening, Gawain falls asleep, and at morn finds himself by the seashore, his horse and arms at his side. He sees the country (which, as it seems, has been in a waste and waterless condition, although nothing has been definitely said to that effect) restored to verdure and freshness as a result of the questions he has asked; the folk whom he encounters bless him for such result, but blame him for not making inquiry with regard to the Grail, a procedure which would have caused them unspeakable satisfaction. He promises himself that, if another opportunity offers, he will be less neglectful, and will inquire as to the mystery (*le secret et tout le service*, 20,333). He resolves to make up for his failure by accomplishing other feats of arms before returning to Britain (the borderlands of adventure in which these occurrences are supposed to take place, though within the island, are not included under that title).

The suggestions on which this narration is founded are furnished by Crestien, who makes Perceval receive from his cousin, the Fisher King, a sword which is to break at the first blow; this weapon is used by Perceval, and actually is shattered, but the pieces are sought and obtained by the Fisher. It has also been stated that the sword may be reunited only by a certain Trebucet, resident at an unnamed lake, and that, after such welding, it will be a trustworthy weapon. The continuator, finding the enigmatical weapon thus in possession of the lord of the Grail, thought that he could make good use of the situation, making ability to join the pieces a necessary part of the credentials of the hero who comes to inquire about the sacred vessel. But, in order to utilize the suggestion, he is obliged altogether to contradict Crestien's representations. There could hardly be a more definite indication that the continuator had no independent information about the story, and that his source, so far as regards a story of the Grail, was solely the incomplete romance of Crestien, complemented by a liberal exercise of imagination. As usual in such cases, the intelligence of the writer was unable to prevent lapse into utter inconsequence;

instead of proceeding to describe the manner in which Arthur's nephew proceeds on his duty of blood vengeance, he turns to another episode, avoiding particulars as to the name and rank of two slain knights, no doubt for the best of reasons, namely, because he had himself no definite idea, and did not find his power of invention sufficiently brilliant to carry him through so difficult a task.

Equal indifference to the intentions of his predecessor is shown in the continuator's treatment of the Grail. In Crestien this is simply a dish used for the purpose of conveying food to an unseen person, of religious profession, who is able to exist on the sacred host, the bread of angels. The continuator has altogether forgotten the invisible occupant of the adjoining chamber, whose comfort had been the sole reason for the introduction of a dish; in his tale the vessel now appears in the character of a miraculous producer of food. The dish has become a talisman, its title *Graal* being not a common but a proper name; it has a mystic character, and the tale relating to it is so sacred that it must be communicated with caution. As the lance is connected with Christian history, and as an account of the Grail is reserved for a climax, it would seem that the vessel also must have been associated, in the author's mind, with the Passion, and that a legend must have belonged to it, as well as to the sacred spear. No such legend has been preserved save that related by Robert de Boron; nor is it clear how any one could have been led to think of a dish as the holiest of Christian symbols, had it not been for the identification with the cup of the Eucharist, which was probably the invention of Robert himself. Moreover, the words cited as applicable to the uses of the vessel are terms used by Robert, and possibly borrowed from him. It has above been argued that in all likelihood the poem of Robert succeeded that of Crestien by a very few years. For these reasons I am inclined to regard the story of the continuator as the result of the concordance of ideas borrowed from Robert and Crestien. It is, however, possible that intermediate terms may have existed; the appearance of Crestien's poem was doubtless followed by a flood of speculations regarding the intent of the author, and the manner in which he had designed to continue his narrative; of the mass of literature relating to the subject, only a small portion has survived. In regard to the date of the continuator nothing definite can be stated, saving that his relation to subsequent works of the cycle seems to indicate his time of writing as scarce later than a decade after the predecessor whose work he undertook to carry on.

(2.) *Second continuator.* — The history was taken up by a rhymers incoherent, but less lively; the name of this poet, who turned his attention to the exploits of Perceval, according to G. Paris, was

probably Gaucher de Dourdan. The result was a tedious narrative in which the ideas of Crestien and his continuator were variously embroidered and expanded. Tales of knights in superb castles waiting to be challenged by sound of horn, champions who fulfil the bidding of their mistresses by defence of dangerous fords, damsels who mourn over slain lovers whom the hero is expected to avenge, are repeated beyond satiety. A great part of the story is occupied by a complicated narration concerning the lady of a castle possessing a self-playing chess-board. Perceval arrives at this castle and plays a game, in which he is mated by the pieces, who move of their own accord; in his disgust he is inclined to throw the board and men into a lake below, but is prevented by the sudden appearance of a fair damsel (who makes a mysterious appearance at the window, standing outside, and in front of the water, line 22,497). Enamoured of this personage, he entreats her favors, and, as a condition of obtaining these, is required to capture the head of a white stag, by the aid of a hound lent for the purpose; the head is obtained, but, together with the hound, carried off by a daughter of the Fisher King, who desires to punish the hero for his failure to make inquiry respecting the Grail. Perceval finds the latter damsel, and requests the return of the stolen property, but is now required to vanquish a knight who has his dwelling in a tomb; while doing battle with this objectionable person, the head and hound are carried off by a brother of the latter. In the sequel Perceval is able to recover the stolen objects and return them to the owner, whose reward he receives. Intercalated is an account of a visit to the mother whom Perceval had deserted: she has passed from earth, but left behind a daughter; from the lips of his sister Perceval is informed of his mother's death. In the end, Perceval a second time reaches the (unnamed) castle of the Fisher King, and (as Gawain in the lines of the first continuator) is required to rejoin the pieces of the sword, a task which he nearly but not quite accomplishes; this partial success causes the host to proclaim his guest as lord of his house; at this point the story, having artfully given a hint of incompleteness, suddenly breaks off (no doubt by intention, the author having undertaken to produce an effect similar to that made by the incomplete tale of Crestien).

The writer has given himself no opportunity to explain his idea of the Grail; but his manner of description, and the epithets he applies are in all respects consonant with the supposition that to him the Grail was known as the sacramental vessel described by Robert de Boron. As in the case of his predecessor, the poet is perfectly ready to contradict the ideas and situations of Crestien, provided he can produce an effect by so doing; he has no hesitation in sacr-

ficing the character of his hero for the sake of disreputable adventures, making him a second time visit his mistress Blancheflor, only for the sake of again abandoning her; he does not seem to have conceived that the sacred nature of the vessel required any corresponding quality in the hero. Respecting his date, nothing further can be said than that the continuation seems to have been familiar to most of the writers subsequently to be considered.

(3.) *Mennecier*. — Nearly a generation later (about 1220) a third rhymier took up the tale. This author was able to add the names wanting in his predecessors; he affirmed that the knight at whose funeral Gawain had assisted was Goon Desert, a brother of the Fisher King, slain by a certain Partinial of the Red Tower, nephew of Espinogre, enemy of the Fisher. The stroke is avenged by Perceval, who carries the head of Partinial to the castle of the Fisherman, and once more witnesses the service of the Grail (the continuator has neglected to notice the mysterious hermit of Crestien's narrative). The Fisher King, learning that Perceval is his nephew, desires to abdicate in his favor; but the guest refuses to accept such preferment during the lifetime of his host. He returns to Arthur's court, where he remains until the decease of the king, when he is summoned by a damsel and assumes the kingdom. After seven years, informed of the decease of his brother Agloval, he retires to a hermitage, whither he is followed by the Grail, which serves him with food. After ten years more he passes away; his soul is taken up to heaven, as are Grail, lance, and salver, while his body is interred in the *Palais Aventureux*, and on his stone inscribed: "Here lies Perceval li Galois, who achieved the adventures of the Holy Grail."

It is clear that this writer understood the Grail in the manner in which it is described by Robert; but the uncertainties of an inaccurate text make it impossible to say whether or not he was acquainted with the Galahad version of the story. It does not seem necessary to argue that his additions to the story are the result of pure invention.

(4.) *Gerbert*. — Of this writer, nearly contemporary with Mennecier, only an abstract has been published, a deficiency probably not to be much regretted. The conclusion is independent of that of Mennecier, but, according to the editor, follows the work of Gaucher. In his second visit to the castle of the Grail, Perceval is unsuccessful and turned away (as Gawain had been). He marries Blancheflor, but a celestial voice bids him preserve his virginity, promising that from his line shall descend a lady who shall be ancestress of the deliverer of the Holy Sepulchre (vol. vi. p. 210; the allusion is to the legend of the Chevalier au Cygne, in which the swan-knight

is made forefather of Godfrey of Bouillon). In a third visit Perceval reunites the pieces of the sword, and in answer to questions is told the story of Joseph of Arimathæa, now explained in conformity with the Galahad romance, obviously familiar to the writer.

The poem thus furnishes an additional example of the freedom used by writers of the cycle; the author has no hesitation in transferring situations from a tale quite different in character.

(5.) *MS. of Berne.* — In a brief but independent ending given in the MS. of Berne, Perceval, in a third visit, names himself to the Fisher King as son of Alain li Gros. The Fisher acknowledges Perceval as his grandson; within three days the king dies, consecrating Perceval as his successor.

(6.) *Prologue.* — An unknown writer thought proper to prefix to Crestien's Perceval an introduction of more than twelve hundred lines. This author was acquainted with three visits of Perceval to the Grail (line 327), and therefore with the sacramental character of the vessel, in accordance with the representations of Robert de Boron; but he furnishes an example of the freedom of these romancers in an account of the vessel totally inconsistent with that of Robert. In ancient times, as he avers, it had been the practice of *puceles* (maidens, *i. e.* fairies) to issue from their mounds bearing refreshment, and carrying wine in cups of gold; King Amangon having violated one of these damsels and carried off her cup, the kingdom became waste, the trees lost their leaves, and the fountains ceased to flow. The cause of the injured damsels was taken up by armed knights, who waged war against Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. One of these cavaliers, Blihos Bliheris, having been captured by Gauvain, was sent prisoner to the court of Arthur, where he remained as a nameless personage. This captive was an excellent story-teller who never bored his hearers: —

Mais si très bons contes savoit  
Que nus ne se péüst lasser  
De ses paroles escouter.

From this informant the knights of the court learn that their antagonists are descendants of the fairy damsels and their outragers. On acquiring this information, the knights vow a quest in search of the court of the Rich Fisher (thus made one of these fairy mansions); this personage, a famous necromancer, was capable of altering his shape in a hundred ways. The poet is acquainted with seven "branches" of the history of the Grail, in each of which the castle is visited by a different knight; among these divisions he mentions stories of Tristan and Lancelot, and a "conte del ciel," perhaps a version of the tale above mentioned concerning Carahes.

The idea set forth by the writer, that trouble between fairies and

mankind had arisen in consequence of the injustice and ingratitude of individuals who had abused their favors, appears elsewhere. It is possible that the author had found something similar in familiar Arthurian stories ; but the connection of the idea with the Grail is to be considered as his own addition, and only another example of the recklessness with which minstrels used the tales they professed to complete.

PERCEVAL (DIDOT MS.).

Robert de Boron makes the future possessor of the holy vessel to have been an unborn son of Alein, sister's son of Joseph of Arimathæa. The work of Robert may have led to numerous attempts to complete the tale. Of such essays two are extant. The first, a continuation of the story of the Merlin, exists only in the single manuscript indicated.

The tale opens with an account of the manner in which Arthur learns from Merlin that the Round Table has been made in imitation of that of the Last Supper and its copy by Joseph, in which had been left an empty seat symbolical of that occupied by Judas. The early history is related after suggestions contributed by Robert's Joseph of Arimathæa. The possessor of the Grail, the Fisher King, now an old man, cannot be cured of his infirmity until visited by the best of knights, who will put a question regarding the use of the Grail, after which the enchantments of Britain will come to an end. Merlin withdraws to his place in Ortoberlande (*i. e.* Northumberland), where he finds Blaise, confessor of Merlin's mother, whom he informs respecting the events ; it is through the work of Blaise, as we are told, that the history is known. In the next scene we are taken to the home of the dying Alein (the Fisher King), who, at the command of the Holy Ghost, bids his son Perceval seek out his grandfather Bron, father of Alein, who dwells in the isles of Ireland, and who will not die until he has been able to commend the holy vessel to his descendant, who is charged, in the first instance, to repair to the court of Arthur, where he will obtain directions in regard to his future course. At Pentecost, in Carlisle, Arthur holds a tournament, at which Perceval makes his appearance, on the first day taking no conspicuous part ; on the second day he bears arms for the sake of Aleine, niece of Gauvain. Perceval is invited by the king to become one of the household, and in spite of the warnings of Arthur, who mentions the fate of previous occupants of the place, insists on seating himself in the perilous seat left at the Round Table (as recounted in the Merlin). The earth opens, and a celestial voice rebukes the king, declaring that, were it not for the excellence of Perceval's father, the guest would have suffered the fate of that Moys who (as related in the poem of Robert) had suffered for simi-



lar presumption: it is said that the infirmity of the Fisher King cannot be cured until one of the companions of the Round Table shall have accomplished such feats of arms as to merit the title of the best of knights; after such distinction is attained, he shall be conducted to the habitation of the Fisher, who will be healed but pass away, leaving to the new-comer the holy vessel and communicating the secret words taught by Joseph. As a consequence of this revelation, Perceval makes a vow to seek the house of the Fisher King, and his example is followed by the other knights; on the following day they come to a chapel and a cross, where the questers separate, each pursuing his own separate path. The adventures of Perceval are narrated at length, the narrative being in great measure based on that of the second continuator concerning the damsel of the chessboard, the head of the white stag, and the stolen hound, a history repeated with additions and improvements; as in the continuation, the sister of Perceval also figures. With these incidents are interwoven adventures patterned after the poem of Crestien, so that the whole narration forms a curious *mélange* of themes derived from the original work and its sequel. In the end, Perceval arrives at the castle of his grandfather, puts the question, and heals the king. Perceval is informed that the lance is that with which Christ was pierced, and that the Grail contained the holy blood collected by Joseph of Arimathæa. A voice from heaven informs Bron that within three days he will depart from earth, after having informed his successor respecting the secret words; angels carry the soul of the king to heaven, and the enchantments of Britain are at an end. At the same time is heard at the Round Table a crash of thunder. Merlin conducts Perceval to Blaise, declaring that his own labors are at an end. A conclusion carries on the history of Arthur until the time of his departure for Avalon, the story being related by Merlin, who declares that he himself can neither die nor henceforth freely move in the world, and who returns to a place of concealment in the forest.

This romance has been regarded as composed by Robert de Boron, and as forming the third member of a trilogy, of which the Joseph of Arimathæa and the Merlin were the earlier divisions. Such seems still to be the opinion of G. Paris ("*Littérature française au moyen âge*," p. 99); but he offers no argument in defence of this position. Supposing the doubts before offered concerning Robert's authorship of the Merlin to obtain acceptance, the supposition falls to the ground. Independently of such view, there are reasons for presuming that the writer of the tale was not identical with the authors of the two other treatises. In favor of such opinion no good ground has been given. Robert makes his romance

depend on a pretended Latin original written by Joseph himself; the writer of the *Perceval* would have his readers believe that a work of Blaise was his authority. The difference of style and conception appears to me so total as to exclude common authorship; the *Perceval* is ultra-romantic, as the *Merlin* is pseudo-historical, and the *Joseph* legendary. According to the *Merlin*, the perilous seat is not to be filled until the achievement of the adventure of the Grail; in the *Perceval*, the place is taken before anything is heard of the Grail, and no further mention is made of the empty place. As the number of banqueters at the Round Table the *Merlin* names fifty knights, the *Perceval* twelve peers, and afterwards thirty knights. Such variation has the appearance of one of those contradictions which, as before observed, continuators, in their reckless desire for originality, were in the habit of introducing. Finally, the father of the hero is named, not Alein, as in the poem of Robert, but Alein li Gros, as in the prose recast of Robert. Again, if the work had really been composed by the same hand as the *Merlin*, it could scarcely have been so neglected as to appear only in a single manuscript.

#### PELLESVAUS.

There is extant another long prose romance, in which *Perceval* is represented as a son of Alein li Gros; this person is now spoken of as lord of the Vales of Camelot (in the MSS. the name is misspelled as Vilein or Julien). Instead of Bron, another name is assigned to the grandfather of *Perceval*, whose mother is a cousin of Lancelot; but the relation of the hero to Joseph of Arimathæa is the same as in the poem of Robert. The writer amused himself with capriciously altering the name *Perceval*, spelling it, in accordance with fantastic derivations, as *Perlesvaux* (expounded as a name indicating the loss of the Vales), or *Par-lui-fet* (self-made): the form *Perceval* is, however, usual; in a subscription the name is spelled *Pellesvaus*.

In this tale no mention is made of an empty seat at the Round Table. In the court of Arthur at Carlisle appear three damsels, who accompany a car drawn by white stags, and bring from the Fisher King a red-cross shield, once the property of Joseph of Arimathæa, hereafter to be used by the destined hero who will accomplish the adventure of the Grail; the proper person will be known by his own shield, which will exhibit a white stag on a red ground, as well as by the reception of a pet hound left for the purpose. The first visit of *Perceval* to the Grail is not expressly related, but he is represented as sick in consequence of his failure. *Perceval* relieves the Chastel de Puceles from the attack of a wicked uncle of his own, the king of the Chastel Mortel. This person, the villain of the drama, persecutes the mother of *Perceval*, who is dwelling at Came-

lot, and her daughter goes to Arthur's court in search of a champion. At this time Perceval himself arrives in a galley managed by a white-haired old man, takes the shield of Joseph, and departs before his sister can come to speech with him. Lancelot and Gawain go in quest of the hero. The sister, however, fortunately meets Perceval, and informs him of his mother's situation; he sets out for Camelot, while the sister goes to a cemetery, whither it is necessary for her to proceed in order to obtain a cloth from the altar. At the entrance of Camelot she overtakes her brother, and the three surviving members of the family are reunited. Perceval departs on adventures, in the course of which he visits his uncle, the Hermit King; certain of his experiences are allegorically explained. Meantime, after the death of the Fisher King, Perceval's wicked uncle has usurped the castle of the Quest, where, in an adjoining chapel, the Grail is wont to appear, and has paganized the place. Perceval, with twelve hermits, undertakes an expedition and storms the castle, while the uncle kills himself. Perceval is now led to undertake a remarkable voyage, in the course of which he touches at various islands. In one of these isles he sees men of remarkable whiteness. By a chain a golden crown is lowered from heaven, and Perceval is made to promise that, when a vessel having a red-cross sail shall appear to take him, he will revisit the isle and take the crown. In another island is living an uncle's wife of the hero, who needs his help; and in still another he finds the tombs of his own ancestors. He returns to the castle of the Quest, where he reigns with his sister and mother; after these pass away, the ship with the red-cross sail arrives, in which Perceval departs, never more to be seen by human eyes. The Grail vanishes from the chapel, which is still in existence; two knights of Wales who visit the chapel become hermits, and never mention the things they have seen. The narrative is attributed to Joseph of Arimathea himself, who is said to have written it in Latin. It has been preserved in the archives of a holy house in the isle of Avalon (presumably Glastonbury). With the story of the main hero are interwoven adventures of Gawain and Lancelot. The former, as a condition of admission to the castle of the Fisher King, is required to fetch the sword with which John the Baptist had been beheaded; the knight, however, is unsuccessful in his second visit. Lancelot, on account of his unrepented sin with the queen, is unable to obtain sight of the Grail. It is a peculiar situation of the romance that Arthur's queen is made to die in consequence of grief for the loss of her son Lohot. The Scottish wars of Arthur are inserted. There is no love story; Perceval is known as the Good Knight, or the Chaste Knight, and the Grail receives the title of Most Holy (*scintille*).

In this romance the most wildly extravagant adventures are narrated in the most prosaic style. Such quality seems characteristic of a relatively late tale, and the fiction has usually been so regarded. On the other hand, many similar situations reappear in the Galahad romance, while the present story seems to exhibit a simpler and earlier type of these incidents. Such considerations, presumably, have led G. Paris to regard the narrative as forming part of the material used by the makers of the Galahad tales. These two positions are not contradictory, for there is every probability that the form in which the romance is extant is not that in which it was originally composed. Independently of this consideration, there is no reason to suppose that we possess more than a small part of the mass of romances relating to the Grail, constructed at the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century, with Perceval for a hero; and it may well be that ideas corresponding to those noted floated freely in these fictions.

Particularly significant is the story respecting the voyages of Perceval; comparison makes it clear that the account is modelled after the famous voyage of St. Brandan. On the other hand, the Galahad romances exhibit very much altered and more marvellous accounts of journeys by sea. In this part of the story, therefore, we seem to obtain a glimpse of the manner in which contemporary literary material was worked up into the Grail romances, and an illustration of the extreme rapidity with which unrestrained fancy elaborated simple accounts into the wildest fiction.

#### NOTES.

*Continuators of Crestien.* See G. Paris, *Hist. litt. de la France*, vol. xxx. pp. 27, 28. (Explanations announced as to be printed in *Romania* have not yet appeared.) H. Waitz, *Die Fortsetzungen von Chrestien's Perceval le Gallois*, Strassburg, 1890. Continuations in the edition of Potvin occupy (1) lines 10,601-21,916, but lines 12,395-15,164 are interpolated: Waitz, p. 5. (2) Lines 21,917-34,934. (3) Lines 34,935-45,379: epilogue, vol. v. pp. 157, 158. In the third continuator the passage containing the history of Joseph of Arimathea, after the Galahad story, lines 34,991-35,128 seems interpolated: Waitz, pp. 12-14. It would, therefore, appear likely that the same is the case with the name Corbiere (variant of Corbenic, the Grail castle). But the name of the Palais Aventureux, line 45,365, where Perceval is interred, also seems reminiscent of that at Sarraz in the Galahad story. Whether Mennecier used a romance of the Galahad type may be left for a critical editor to decide. The ending of MS. of Berne is given by A. Rochat, *Über einen bisher unbekannten Percheval li Galois*, Zürich, 1855, p. 90; Prologue in Potvin, lines 1-1282.

*Perceval (Didot MS.).* In E. Hucher, *Le Saint-Graal*, 1875, vol. i. pp. 415-505. *Pellegrins.* In Potvin, vol. i. pp. 1-352.

*Relation of the Perceval of Crestien to later romances of the cycle.* The doctrine set forth in these pages, that stories treating of the Grail depend exclusively on the poem of Crestien, will receive confirmation from an examination of the

manner in which passages of the poem have been expanded into long and contradictory narrations. As examples of this process may be cited the following developments: (1) *Misinterpretation of pronouns*. In line 7789 the pronoun *cil* has reference to the father of the Roi Pestécour, not to that personage; the contrary supposition has caused Perceval's host to be set down as his uncle instead of his cousin (so in Nutt's abstract). In line 4749 *cil* refers to Perceval, not to the cousin; the reverse supposition causes Wolfram to represent the hero as ignorant of his own proper name. On this account the address of Perceval's mother to her son as *beau fils*, line 1567, is understood by Wolfram as meaning that this was the only appellation of the boy (compare the prologue in Potvin, line 1234),—an idea remote from the mind of Crestien. (2) *The Adventures of Britain*. In line 2449 the idiot who has been injured by the seneschal assures the king that the latter is to encounter perilous adventures: in this prediction the poet only intended to include the experiences recounted in connection with the appearance of Perceval; but the phrase was understood by later romancers as signifying the Quest of the Grail and its dangers, commonly spoken of as the Adventures of Britain, or the Enchantments of Britain. (3) *The bleeding lance*. In Crestien's tale this weapon has nothing to do with the wounds of the Fisher King, which are said to have happened in a battle in which he had been hurt by a javelin, line 4691. The current French explanation came to be that the spear was that with which Christ had been wounded; but the weapon is connected with the wound of the Fisher King in lines which have been celebrated, but seem to be interpolated, 7542-45, where it is stated that the kingdom of Logres had been or would ultimately be (the form *ert* is ambiguous) ruined by this lance. (4) *The Sword with the Strange Hangings*. The Fisher King presents Perceval, a stranger in his house, with a sword of which the hangings are precious (lines 4337-38. *Celui ki laiens ert estranges, De ceste esplee par les ranges*). In line 6090 is mentioned a totally different weapon, as the Sword with Strange Hangings (*L'esplee as estranges ranges*). Confusion led to the supposition that this latter weapon was connected with the story of the Grail. According to Crestien, the sword is to break at the first blow, and must be welded by its maker, Trebucet. The first continuator uses and perverts the idea, making the weapon break in a mysterious encounter, in which falls a knight by whose loss the kingdom of Logres is said to be ruined (as above noted, an interpolator applied this description to the lance). The continuator did not furnish a name for this slain knight. Mennequier knows that he was called Goon Desert. The Queste considers the sword to have belonged to King David, and mentions its fracture in a strife between Lambar, one of the Fisher Kings, and a warrior named Urlain. A continuator of the Merlin is acquainted with another dolorous blow in which has figured the weapon of a two-sworded knight; this brand, brought from Avalon, becomes a possession insuring the ruin of its owner, having figured in the combat of two brothers, Balaain and Balaan (Malory has inserted the story); with this sword Lancelot will slay his dearest friend Gawain. Again, the fortunes of a two-sworded knight are divergently recounted in the *Chevalier aux deux espees*. In this manner a few lines of the master serve as the seed, whence rise branch and entwine a whole library of fiction.

*The Second Continuator and Robert de Boron*. The lines of the continuator (as printed by Potvin): *li Gréaus — Que tant est biaux et présions — Ÿ est li clers sans glorions — Del Roi des rois* (28072-75), seem to me obviously a paraphrase of the words of Robert: *Devant ce reissel précieux — Oū est vestres sans glorions* (2452-53). So the idea of Gaucher, that the Grail protects him that sees it against the wiles of the Devil during that day (28,078-81) seems borrowed from Robert's similar statement (3061-76).

#### IV.

AN account has been given of prose romances in which a quest of the Grail is achieved by Perceval, grand-nephew of Joseph of Arimathæa. The chronology assumes that the Arthurian period belonged to the end of the first century. So ignorant a misconception could not long pass unchallenged; it was thought necessary to postpone the action by four hundred years; such extension of time was effected by insertion of a number of ancestors, described as protectors of the Grail and possessors of the country in which it was kept. Together with this alteration went a change more essential, in virtue of which the place of Perceval came to be filled by a hero to whom was given the name which in English orthography appears as Galahad. Tales making mention of this new actor belong to a time when efforts were made to bring into a connected whole the inconsistent narratives dealing with the fortunes of knights of the Round Table. This result was accomplished by means of a voluminous composition, in which the most important figure was Lancelot of the Lake, whose passion for Arthur's queen became the centre of the history. An introductory composition undertook to explain the descent of the chief Arthurian heroes from Joseph of Arimathæa; while the interval between the earlier history and the advent of Lancelot was filled by a biography of Merlin, now continued and expanded. In this manner the body of Arthurian narrative was brought into some sort of sequence; and it is only as forming integral parts of this extensive system of fiction that have survived tales dealing with Galahad as the accomplisher of the quest.

#### GRAND ST. GRAAL, OR NASCIEN.

This romance is a recast of the story of Joseph of Arimathæa composed by Robert de Boron; the remodeller chose to indicate Robert as author of his reconstruction. A modern editor, Hucher, accepting such statement as veritable, assumed that Robert had written two histories of the Grail, and printed the longer romance under the title of *Grand St. Graal*, designating the shorter composition as *Petit St. Graal*. For want of a better name, the misleading title has been retained; it would seem wiser to denominate the story according to the name of some one of its chief actors, preferably Nascien, who figures as ancestor of Lancelot and Galahad. The author called his story simply *estoire du Graal*.

The writer, who wishes to be thought a well-known hermit reluctant to give his name, audaciously describes his work as in the

nature of holy scripture written by the hand of God, who is said to have appeared in vision in the year 717 after the Passion, bringing the book, which on Ascension Day is to be taken up to heaven, and which the hermit is told to copy (of this book, as above observed, Robert de Boron is afterwards indicated as translator). After the preface narrating this vision are recited adventures of Joseph of Arimathæa, according to the model furnished by Robert, but with expansions. The romance then proceeds to deal, at great length, with the experience of certain converts of Joseph, namely, Evelach king of Sarras near Babylon, his brother-in-law Josephe, and Celi-doine, son of the latter. At Sarras, by divine mandate, Josephe, son of Joseph, is consecrated as first Christian bishop, Christ himself performing the ordination: Evelach, who is at war with the king of Egypt, receives from Josephe a red-cross shield, with an injunction that it shall be uncovered only in time of mortal peril; this advice Evelach obeys, and in his utmost danger is saved by a (supernatural) white knight; he is baptized under the name of Mordrain, while Seraphe takes that of Nascien. In a vision, Mordrain sees his nephew Celidoine, son of Nascien, caught up to heaven, while nine rivers flow from his body; in eight of these a man from heaven washes his extremities, but in the ninth is completely immersed; the vision is expounded as having reference to the race of Celidoine, whose last descendants are Lancelot and Galahad.

The converts undergo a series of temptations and tribulations, being severally taken up by the Holy Ghost, and carried to rocky islets (the idea is borrowed from the temptation of Jesus); in this solitude Mordrain and Nascien suffer from assaults of the devil in feminine form, but are consoled by the daily visits of an old man (impersonating divine grace) who arrives in a self-sailing silver ship; eventually the three relations are brought together on a marvellous vessel, the ship of Solomon (emblematic of the Church), of which is given a curious and elaborately symbolic account.

Solomon having had an unfortunate experience of women, and indulging in satire of the sex, it is revealed to him that from his line shall come a virgin, through whom shall be made good the fall of our first parents; the race shall not end in this spotless maiden, but terminate in a virgin knight (Galahad), who shall deliver his people. Anxious to leave a memento for this descendant, Solomon, who in spite of his acrimony seems to be in the habit of taking the advice of his wife, constructs a wonderful vessel, in which he places a bed, with a crown at the head, and at the foot the sword of his father David, which for the purpose he furnishes with a new pommel; the hangings, supplied by Solomon's wife, are of tow, she declaring that they can be changed only by the daughter of a king (the sister

of Perceval, as related in the *Queste*). The bed is inclosed by a frame composed of two rods (presumably designed to sustain a canopy) rising perpendicularly from the centre of each side, and above crossed by a third; these rods (or spindles) are of the three symbolic colors, white for chastity, green for long-suffering, and red for charity; they are made from a scion of the Tree of Life, the wood of which has undergone three changes of color corresponding to the periods of primeval innocence, of the fall, and of the redemption; the vessel is only to be entered by persons of perfect faith.

On board of the ship is also taken a princess of Persia, the sole survivor of a vessel in which she has sailed; the princess must have been an acquaintance of Celidoine, he having already been described as preaching the gospel in that country, but as set adrift by jealous barons. Before reaching port, Celidoine is carried away by a mysterious bark and landed in Britain, whither also proceed Joseph of Arimathæa and his company, who use Joseph's shirt as a miraculous conveyance, preceded by the Grail, carried by bearers who walk on the sea; Celidoine comes to the city of Galefort, and preaches to the duke of that city; Mordrain, Nascien, and the princess arrive at Mordrain's country, but before Nascien can be reached by his wife he sets out in search of his lost son, and is carried by Solomon's ship to Britain, where he joins the party of Joseph, and in Galefort finds Celidoine. Joseph temporarily retires to the forest of Broceliande in Scotland; Josephe preaches the gospel in Britain, but is thrown into prison by the cruel king of North Wales; Mordrain, in Sarra, is notified by a dream, and makes a military expedition for Josephe's release, taking with him his own wife Sarracinte, Flegentine wife of Nascien, and the Persian princess. Mordrain finds his kinsmen in Galefort, and in the resulting war the king of North Wales is slain and Josephe released; the princess of Persia is united in marriage to Celidoine, who becomes king of Britain, and from this alliance descends the Grail hero. Sarracinte bears a son Galaad, who gives his name to *Gales* or Wales, and is ancestor of Urien (father of Yvain).

The romance proceeds to recite the story of Bron, Alein, Moya, and Petrus, as told by Robert de Boron, but with many expansions, the scene now being laid in Britain. Pier (Petrus) becomes king of the city of Orcanie and ancestor of Lot and Gawain. Mordrain, while approaching too near the Grail, is blinded by a hot wind, but in answer to his prayer receives a divine promise that he shall not pass from earth before looking on the face of Galaad (Galahad), the last of his line. With the exception of Mordrain and Celidoine, the actors simultaneously pass away; Josephe, in dying, retraces with his blood the red cross on the shield of Mordrain, which is deposited



in the abbey where Nascien is interred, there to await the advent, after four hundred years, of the last of his race (Galahad).

The story concludes by relating the lineage of the Grail hero on the father's and mother's side, in an equal number of generations. Instead of Alein, Josue, brother of Josephe, is substituted as ancestor (so that Galahad comes directly from Joseph of Arimathæa). Josue marries the daughter of a king Alphasan, who builds for the Grail the castle of Corbenic; from the danger of approaching too near the holy vessel, the hall of the castle receives the name of *Palais Adventureus* (as that of Sarra is called *Palais Esperitch*). In consequence of the divine wrath resulting from the slaying of Lambor (great-grandfather of Galahad) by a certain Varlan (or Bruillant), the kingdom becomes waste, and takes the name of Terre Gaste instead of Terre Foraine. The son of Lambor is Pellehan, who approaches too near the holy vessel, and is wounded by a divine weapon; it is predicted that he shall be healed only by his grandson (Galahad). His son is Pelles, the Fisher King, whose daughter (unnamed), through Lancelot of the Lake, becomes mother of Galahad. The descendants of Celidoine are enumerated, ending in Lancelot and Galahad; it is stated that the story will be continued in the tale of Merlin.

In spite of its prolixity and involution, the scheme of the elaborate narrative appears sufficiently simple. The whole composition seems intended to pave the way for the advent of a new Grail-hero, who shall be a son of Lancelot of the Lake, as well as a scion of the race of Joseph of Arimathæa. It was thought essential to provide this personage with an ancestry as imposing as that in earlier tales ascribed to Perceval; such end was accomplished by the introduction of a new group, Mordrain, Nascien, and Celidoine, answering to Joseph, Bron, and Alein of the tale of Robert de Boron. The adventures of this trio, although in appearance involved, really constitute an allegory, depicting the trials of new converts, their sustenance by divine grace, their tossing in the agitated waters of the world, and their deliverance in the ship of the church. The poem of Robert naturally falls into two portions, severally reciting his imprisonment and release, and the service and surrender of the Grail; in order to insert the new material, these divisions are separated, and the additional matter intercalated. Designing to derive from his main actors the families of the principal knights of the Round Table, the writer prefers that part of the action shall pass in Britain; in order to accomplish this purpose, it is necessary to represent Joseph of Arimathæa as an evangelist in that island. In accordance with current legend, Robert had described Joseph as a

soldier, whereas in the opinion of the later romancer the head of the pilgrim community ought to figure as a representative of Holy Church; accordingly, the personality of Joseph is divided, and the greater part of his activity now assigned to a son Joseph, who, as divinely ordained proto-bishop, is able to typify the clergy. In spite of this complex allegory, the writer is rather a novelist than a theologian, has at heart more the inditing of an agreeable story than the maintenance of a doctrinal thesis; his composition, as already remarked, is intended as an introduction to a body of fiction, in which the achiever of the quest was represented as Galahad. It seems reasonable to suppose that the long romance, occupying some eight hundred pages in the edition of Hucher, may have reached its present form only as the ultimate of several successive editions. The continuing invention of new episodes is attested by the manuscripts; one long addition has been printed by Hucher. Nevertheless, if the analysis here given be correct, it would appear to follow that the outlines of the story must have belonged to the tale as first devised.

A notice by a Cistercian chronicler, Helinandus, has been thought to furnish means for a determination of time. This writer mentions, under a date of about 717, that at this time a hermit in Britain was shown by an angel a wonderful vision concerning Joseph, a noble decurion, who took down from the cross the body of our Lord, and concerning the dish (*catino illo vel paropside*) in which the Lord supped with the disciples, and in which by the same hermit had been written a story termed *gradale*. Now, says the chronicler, in the French tongue *gradalis* or *gradale* signifies a dish (*scutella*) wide and somewhat deep, in which costly viands are commonly served in courses (*gradatim*), one morsel after another in various arrangement. In the vulgar speech it is also termed *greal*, as to the partaker grateful (*grata*), and acceptable as well by reason of the containing vessel, made of silver or other expensive material, as for the sake of the contents, namely, the manifold service of various meats. The history, as he says, he failed to find in Latin, but only in French, in which form it was possessed by certain nobles, but even thus not easy to be found complete.

It would seem self-evident that this notice refers to the present romance, with which it corresponds in virtue of date, the description of the Grail, and the mention of the work as introductory. As Helinandus ended his chronicles in 1204, it has been assumed that the composition took place at that time; but such ground appears unstable. The existing form of the prose tale seems to imply a later date; Gaston Paris tentatively suggests about 1240.

In the Nascien the functions of the holy vessel are similar to those which it performs in the poem of Robert. It is carried by

the pilgrims in their wanderings in an ark (symbolical of the ark of the covenant); it is placed as the chief object on a table (corresponding to that of the eucharist), at which the righteous are fed with such food as they may desire (*ke on pcust desircr*, Hucher, vol. ii. p. 367). It is described as covered by a paten (i. 212). But there is a cardinal distinction, in that while in Robert's account the Grail is but a name for the eucharistic chalice, in the recast it is defined as the dish in which was served the Paschal Lamb. Hence the idea becomes confused, and the vessel is degraded to a talisman; in feeding the multitude, it is placed on the table, and the bread is multiplied as in the example of the miracle of the loaves and fishes.

The difficulties which this alteration of definition occasioned are exhibited in the elaborate and interesting account of the episcopal consecration of Josephe (ed. Hucher, vol. ii. p. 173 ff.), in which the writer has endeavored to make his narration conform to the practice of the cathedral churches of his day. The ark holding the Grail is represented as standing in the great hall of the Palais Esperitel at Sarraz; a knowledge of its contents is given through a series of visions of a mystical character.

(1.) Standing before the open door of the ark, Josephe sees Christ surrounded by angels bearing the instruments of the Passion, cross, nails, lance, sponge, scourge; presently the Redeemer is seen to be fixed on the cross and pierced by the lance, while the blood runs down into the holy vessel below his feet (the Grail).

(2.) Joseph, noticing the absorption of his son, presses forward, and obtains quite a different spectacle. In the ark stands an altar, covered with a white cloth surmounted by a red one. On one side of the altar reposes the lance-head, on the other the Grail, while in the centre stands a golden cup covered by a golden plate (chalice and paten), the cup containing the wine, and the plate the bread. Before the altar (facing Joseph) is seen a lifted hand holding a cross (a hand extended from a cloud being a symbol of deity), opposite (between Joseph and the altar), two hands carrying candles.

(3.) While so occupied, Joseph hears open the door of a chamber (probably a chamber in which the Grail is supposed to be kept, as is the case in Corbenic); he turns his head, and sees a procession pass through the door and enter the hall. In advance come angels, who act as aspergers and thurifers; an angel whose forehead is signed with letters (as in the sacred art of the time), bears the holy vessel, which reposes on a green cloth, while on one side is carried Holy Scripture, on the other a drawn sword. Behind proceed angelic candle-bearers, with candles of the three symbolic colors; last advances the risen Christ, robed as a priest. The procession makes circuit of the palace, and halts in front of the altar, making obeis-

sances. Supernatural persons habited as clergy bring forth vestments and array Joseph, Christ himself bestowing mitre, crosier, and ring, and expounding the symbolic significance of episcopal robes.

(4.) The consecration having thus been performed, Joseph is able to celebrate mass and enters the ark, which supernaturally enlarges to receive him (the ark answering to the chancel, which only priests may tread), while the people remain without. The altar is supposed to be arranged as before described, the chalice being surmounted by the paten holding the bread. The celebrant uttering the words of consecration, the wine is changed into blood and the bread to the body of Christ; from the paten the officiator takes the host, and perceives that the figure of a child has taken the place of the bread; he dismembers and partakes, while angels make genuflection. This done, attendant angels receive the paten and chalice, and return to the holy vessel, the paten on top of the chalice; the angels once more elevate and carry forth paten, cup, and vessel in procession through the building; the faithful communicate (but so far as the account shows, only of the bread). The sacred utensils are returned to the altar; the bishop disrobes, the vestments are placed in the ark, and a treasurer is appointed to take in charge the sacred objects.

In this curious account it will be seen that the arrangement of chalice and paten answers to that described in the words of Honorius of Auxerre, above noticed as paraphrased by Robert de Boron, and as forming the centre of his poem; the paten lies on the cup, serving as its cover, while plate and chalice are elevated in one act. To Robert this description presents no difficulty, inasmuch as with him the Grail is but a proper name for the cup; but the remodeller, embarrassed by his conception of the holy vessel as a dinner-dish, does not know in what way to utilize it in the ceremony, and can find no better resort than to make it serve the purpose of a receptacle; while he assigns to the chalice, conceived as a different vessel, the function which Robert had given to the Grail, now inconsistently made to occupy a subordinate position. Such manner of representation seems to be quite consonant with the theory that the progress of the legend consisted in a series of attempts to concord the independent and contradictory stories of Crestien and Robert.

In the latter part of the romance, the surroundings of the vessel are similar to the circumstances narrated in the *Queste*; it is kept in the upper chamber of the castle of Corbenic, whence of its own accord at night it enters the main hall, carried by unseen bearers, only the sound of whose wings is heard, and where service is performed before it by saints and angels; the place is too holy to be

used as a sleeping-chamber (vol. iii. p. 291). This more fantastic account may seem to suggest the labor of a different hand.

In the romance of *Pellesvaus*, above mentioned, it is stated that the Grail is susceptible of five different transmutations of shape, one being the eucharistic chalice; it served as the first cup used in the dominions of Arthur. The mention may be thought to indicate that the writer of the *Pellesvaus* was acquainted with inconsistent representations of the holy vessel, in one of which it figured as a cup of the sacrament; and certainly the manner of notice seems indicative of a later period of composition than that of the *Grand St. Graal*.

#### AGRAVAIN.

The long *Lancelot* romance consists of several distinct editions, reciting respectively the youth of the hero, his advent at court, and the incipency of his passion for the queen (*Galehaut*), his rescue of *Guinevere* from the mysterious land to which she has been taken by a ravisher (*Chevalier de la Charrette*), the quarrel of *Lancelot* with the queen, and his madness (*Agravain*), the quest of the Holy Grail (*Queste*), and the fall of the kingdom of Arthur (*Mort Artus*). The third and fourth of these divisions are connected as preface and sequel of a single story.

Although repeatedly included among early productions of the printing-press, the *Lancelot* has not as yet been critically edited from the manuscripts; in particular the *Agravain* is accessible only through a very brief abstract of P. Paris, and through the version of Sir Thomas Malory, in the twelfth and thirteenth books of his *Morte Darthur*, including only selected portions of the narrative. The variations of Malory from the usual French text of the romance have been pointed out by H. O. Sommer in his edition of the English writer.

As already remarked, the *Agravain* supplies an introduction to the story of the *Queste*. In the course of adventures, *Lancelot* arrives at *Corbenic*, the castle of *Pelles*, the maimed Fisher King; in order to fulfil an oracle, without *Lancelot's* intention, a meeting is arranged between him and *Elaine*, daughter of *Pelles*; the fruit of this encounter is *Galahad*, who is reared in *Corbenic*, and there seen as a babe by *Bohor*, in the course of a visit to the castle. *Bohor* passes a night of trial in the *Palais Adventureus*; being wounded, he is left in the hall, and there visited and healed by the Grail, which enters through the windows, preceded by a censer-bearer (a flying serpent or dove, according to different versions), and carried by a (supernatural) white-robed maiden, not clearly discernible. *Bohor* afterwards comes to the door of the chamber in which is kept the vessel, and sees it standing on a silver table, while a person habited as bishop (presumably *Josephe*) says mass before it. The appear-

ance of Perceval at Arthur's court is related. The writer introduces the Gallic wars of Arthur, followed by the Pentecostal feast described by Geoffrey of Monmouth ; in the account of the latter this festival is immediately followed by the Roman wars and the struggle with Mordred ; but the French romancer intercalates a long period containing the exploits of the knights of the Round Table in Britain. The daughter of Pelles attends this festival, as does Lancelot ; the latter, once more unintentionally unfaithful to the queen, is reproved by the latter, and in consequence loses his mind, flying to the forest. After various experiences, he comes as a want-wit to Corbenic, is found by Elaine, and carried before the Grail to be healed. Accompanied by Elaine, he withdraws to a retreat called the Joyous Isle, whence, through the agency of his half-brother, Hector de Mares, and Perceval, he is once more induced to visit the court. By this time the young Galahad has reached the period of an independent resolution ; desiring to be near his father, he asks and obtains permission to be transferred from Corbenic to an abbey near Camelot, where his education is intrusted to a hermit-tutor. A lapse of some years is now presumed to take place.

#### QUESTE DEL SAINT GRAAL.

This part of the Lancelot has been separately printed by Furnivall, but only from one MS. There exists also a Welsh translation, of a very faithful and literal character, but, as compared with the French text, exhibiting a number of omissions ; it would seem that the Welsh manuscript represents a better text, the increments being invariably the result of interpolation. Whether there is in existence any French text answering to that of the Welsh version, can only be determined by a future critical edition.

The story is continued from the Agravain, the tale relating a visit of Lancelot to the abbey of nuns where Galahad resides, the knighting of the youth, his advent in Arthur's court, and his extraction of a sword from a block of marble (the incident is imitated after that related in the Merlin concerning a similar feat of Arthur). The Holy Grail appears, covered by a white napkin (the color of chastity), carried as usual by invisible bearers, and passes before the tables, causing these to be supplied with all desirable food ; the knights vow a quest, not to be intermitted until they shall reach the court (of the Fisher King), where such fare is daily supplied. Galahad is owned chief of the questers, who pursue their several ways ; he is provided with the red-cross shield hanging in the abbey where Nascien is interred (as recited in the romance treating of the latter), and performs feats allegorically interpreted, driving away the evil spirit that has taken up residence in the body of an entombed knight,

and releasing the imprisoned damsels of the castle of maidens (symbolical of souls in hell). Gawain and Perceval are overthrown by Galahad, who disappears, pursued by the others; Gawain and other knights fail to obtain opportunities of distinction (a failure emblematic of their unregenerate condition). Lancelot finds the Holy Grail standing on the altar of a lonely chapel, whence it descends in order to heal a sick knight, but falls asleep, and fails to honor the sacred vessel. The adventures of Perceval are related at length; he learns from an aunt that the quest is to be achieved by three persons, two virgins (Galahad and himself) and one chaste (Bohor); he arrives at the abbey of Mordrain, and sees the aged king; he is tempted by the devil, but consoled by the aged mariner (the same who appears in the Nascien story), and is taken away by a vessel that touches at his isle (after the manner of the characters in the romance last named). Gawain and Lancelot arrive at the cell of a hermit named Nascien (a different person from the Nascien of the Grand St. Grail), and are rebuked as personified Pride and Ostentation; Lancelot submits to scourging, and promises amendment, while Gawain is informed that he is to have no part in the quest. Adventures of Bohor are related; in time of need he abandons his brother in order to rescue a maiden, and finally enters the vessel which carries Perceval. The two are joined by Galahad, who is guided by Perceval's sister; they go to sea, and on an island discover Solomon's ship, concerning which is given the same account found in the Nascien story. The lady renews the hangings of the sword of David, which she supplies with cords of her own hair, dedicated to that use from the day of Galahad's knighthood; she presents Galahad with the sword, named the Sword of Strange Hangings. The voyagers land in Scotland; the sister of Perceval gives her blood to heal a leprous lady and perishes, giving directions that her body shall be put on board a ship without a crew, in order that the vessel may be wafted to Sarra, where she wishes to be buried in the Palais Esperitel. The three knights separate; Lancelot finds the ship conveying Perceval's sister, and here remains half a year in company with his son Galahad. A white knight bids them depart in order to complete the Adventures of Britain. Lancelot, in the course of wanderings, comes to Corbenic, and sees the Grail in the chamber, where it is covered with a green napkin, on a silver table, while mass is said by a mysterious priest, and angels swing censers. At the elevation of the host, Lancelot sees the celebrant overweighted by three men (the bread which has taken the form of the Trinity); he starts forward to assist him, but is struck down by a hot wind; on coming to himself he is told that his quest is ended. Hector arrives, but does not know that he

has reached the goal, and abandons the quest in shame. Galahad comes to Mordrain's abbey, and heals the sick king; he finally joins Bohor, in whose company during five years, he achieves the Adventures of Britain, and the two at last arrive at Corbenic.

The conclusion is of the most curt brevity. Galahad is recognized with joy, as an absentee of many years. Concerning the healing of the maimed being, nothing seems to be said; the French text, by an interpolation, has remedied the omission. The questers are led into the palace, where the Grail is seen standing on a silver table, and left alone, accompanied only by a (symbolic) maiden. Nine mysterious knights (who seem to typify the communion of saints) appear and unite in the ceremony. Josephe, first Christian bishop ordained by Christ at Sarras, descends from heaven in order to perform the rite; after the bread has been consecrated, the Redeemer replaces the celebrant, and himself dispenses the host. Christ informs the questers concerning the nature of the Holy Vessel, as the dish of the Paschal Lamb, and directs them to follow the Grail to Sarras, whither it will presently retire. Accordingly, the three proceed to the shore, where they find the ship of Solomon, and whither proceed the Grail and table. In the port of Sarras they find the vessel containing the body of Perceval's sister; they suffer persecution from a heathen tyrant, but the latter dies, and by divine command Galahad is made king. A year after the coronation, Josephe again descends and celebrates mass; when the plate which covers the holy vessel is raised, Christ appears within the Grail, and Galahad, according to his desire, passes away in ecstatic vision. Perceval dies as a hermit, while Bohor finally returns to Arthur's court, where he tells the story.

The French text adds that the account had been written out by order of King Arthur, and deposited in the abbey of Salisbury, where it was found by Walter Map, who translated it for King Henry.

The central feature of this composition is the figure of Galahad. The name (as Heinzel has pointed out) is biblical, Galaad being, in the Vulgate, the name of that great-grandson of Joseph who in the English version (Numbers xxvi. 29, and elsewhere) is styled Gilead. In Judges x. 18, where the English translation has, "He shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead," the Latin renders *erit dux populi Galaad*; the romancer may hence have derived the idea of making Galahad king of the people (biblical names are common among kings of the line as given in *Grand St. Graal*). Assonance with *Gales*, Wales, may also have had weight. That the proper names Galaad and Lancelot are repeated in the story, being



applied also to other members of the family, does not appear to need explanation, being entirely in keeping with the art of the narrator.

Some incidents of the story are parallel to those recited in the Perceval romances. That the Grail is made to emigrate from the castle of the quest to a home beyond the waves is in correspondence with the narrative of the Pellesvaus. The latter also mentions the red-cross shield, but as belonging to Joseph, who, being a soldier, might well leave such a relic to a descendant. The appearance of Galahad at court is quite correspondent to that of Perceval in the prose romance. Speaking more generally, the idea of a quest after the holy vessel is identical in both classes of tales. That the Galahad story is essentially a recast of that relating to Perceval may perhaps be thought evident from the alteration of time and insertion of additional generations of ancestors; but it does not follow that the extant Perceval romances can be shown to be earlier.

In the *Queste*, the description of the Grail shows a tendency to become more talismanic and less symbolic. From the chamber in which it is kept it proceeds to the hall of the palace, exactly how does not appear. Here Galahad finds it on the silver table; it seems an inconsistency that the spear (and, in the French text, a napkin) has to be carried in procession from the chamber. From this residence the Grail proceeds through Britain, on errands of healing and mercy.

In the final and most important part of the story the celebrant is Joseph, and reference is made to his consecration as first Christian bishop, a mention showing that the author had in mind the *Grand St. Graal*, which introduces this personage. Ritually considered, the account of the *Queste* is unintelligible. The bleeding lance is said to be placed in such manner as to exude into the Grail, filling it with blood; presently, in obvious contradiction, it is stated that the vessel serves as depositary of the sacramental bread. Over the lance-head and the Grail is laid a napkin; but in the second service we read that the vessel is covered by a paten, an arrangement only proper for the eucharistic cup. In the first ceremony Christ himself rises from the bread and feeds the communicants, so that the vision is complete; in the second, only a partial glimpse of the Redeemer is obtained: thus we have bathos where climax is intended. The words put into the mouth of Christ are of childish simplicity; they answer to Christ's admonition to the newly consecrated bishop in the antecedent romance, where they possess some applicability. It would seem that the writer of the *Queste* modelled his relation on the story of the ordination as related in the *Grand St. Graal*; what there is reasonable and intelligible, regarded as a mystic account of an ecclesiastical rite, in the brief imitation of the *Queste* becomes

little better than nonsense. The idea to be conveyed is, that the mystery of the Grail, in other words the secret of a holy life, consists in the reception, through ecstatic vision, of the self-incarnating Redeemer, a privilege accorded solely to participants in the office of the mass, and only to such of these as are able to lead a religious, that is to say, an ascetic life; so long as this conception is set forth, the author is quite indifferent to the consistency of details.

The Agravain recites the manner in which Galahad was born, and how he came to be a resident of an abbey near Camelot. The Queste presupposes such history, and cannot therefore be regarded as an independent composition, but only as another volume of an elaborate novel. That the productions are not entirely consistent shows that they were not produced at one time by one hand.

That the same remark applies to other portions of the Lancelot story is proven by the introduction of Bohor as one of the questers, he being chaste, albeit no virgin knight; such mention has relation to a chapter of the Lancelot story reciting a corresponding adventure of Bohor.

With relation to the Grand St. Graal, or Nascien romance, the case is similar. It has been shown that the final and principal chapter of the Queste seems to be modelled on the former story. So also the abstract given of the history of the converts Mordrain, Nascien, and Celidoine refers to the earlier romance, in which, as already observed, the motive is allegorical. The same is true of the introduction of the ship of Solomon, which in the Grand St. Graal has a function as serving to transport the actors, as well as to typify the delivering church; in the Queste, the vessel appears to be dragged in merely for the purpose of decoration.

On the other hand, even although the Nascien story may have been earlier than the existing form of the Queste, and served as a model for the latter, yet it seems clear that it must have been composed to serve as preface for a tale of the quest in which the achiever was a son of Lancelot; furthermore, the relation as now preserved has been edited in such manner as to bring it into accord with the extant version of the Queste.

The conclusion must be, that the several works mentioned form a body of romance, every part of which has been edited and reëdited with reference to every other. In this task have been engaged many hands, the resulting stories never being brought to absolute uniformity; various stages in the development may be conjecturally indicated, but it seems very improbable that complete apprehension will ever be attained; one might as well turn a telescope on a mirage as expect by methods of minute scholarship to solve such a problem. On general principles, it may be presumed that the reputation of

Galahad, as substitute for Perceval, the earlier hero of the quest, had been established by some one work of merit, which we possess only in the form of the developments to which it gave rise ; but as recasts give small idea of originals, it will be safest to assume that no notion can be obtained respecting the nature of such supposititious story.

The complication of the extant romances is still further increased by indications that in addition to the *Queste* as now preserved existed other French versions of the history. An example of such an independent narrative is furnished by a Portuguese work entitled "*Demanda do Santo Graall*," doubtless the rendering of a lost French original. The "*Demanda*" has only in part been printed ; so far as accessible, it makes the impression of a story yet more sophisticated than the *Queste*, and exhibiting still further advance in the evolution of the cycle. In any case, the existence of such a production goes to make clear the extent to which each successive editor indulged his fancy, his alterations being limited only by his powers of invention and adaptation.

Setting aside questions of origin, and regarding the *Queste* as a much edited conglomerate, in which the material was finally brought into a form deemed suitable for incorporation in the Lancelot romance, it still appears possible to decipher the motives presiding over the construction. The Holy Grail being considered as representing the central mystery of the faith, the eternal self-sacrifice of Christ, as represented in the ceremony of the mass, it was necessary that the possessor of the vessel should exhibit a character in conformity with the ecclesiastical ideal of the Christian life. This ideal of excellence was that belonging to monastic asceticism ; for such presentation the figure of Perceval, as it had been drawn by Crestien, was too human ; it therefore was thought necessary to invent a new hero, who should more perfectly answer to the conventional conception of laudable piety. For the sake of popularity, as well as of artistic contrast, this person was made a son of the admired Lancelot, to whose unlawful passion he offered the most complete opposition. In order not to break too violently with a form of the tale still accepted, it was considered worth while to associate Perceval as a subordinate hero of the quest ; to avoid awkward duplication, and secure a symbolic trinity, Bohor, cousin of Lancelot, was added to the group. Lancelot, though rejected with the pride of the churchman who sets foot on the magnificence of the world, was yet treated with the respect due to his office as main hero of the long narrative in which the story of the quest was to be only an episode. Other knights of the Round Table were introduced merely for the purpose of expressing reprobation of secular splendor. In the por-

trait of the central personage, care was taken to remove every trait that implied failure or disappointment; in Galahad was to be exhibited only the shining forth of spiritual glory manifest in the Christ of whom he is avowedly a copy. The character of the hero, apparently chivalric, is in reality ecclesiastical, and the narrative an eulogium, under the form of the novel, of monasticism and especially of celibacy.

It may be doubted how far such manner of representation was the expression of individual conviction, how far of conscious art. The *Queste* was designed as one volume of a fashionable romance, of which other volumes were intended to possess sentimental attraction; such inconsistency in no wise disturbed the author, who was not incommoded by the knowledge that his pious construction depended on a discreditable intrigue.

Respecting the characteristics of the story, the present writer has observed, in the Introduction of a recent work: "The narrative exhibits no development of personality, no characteristic portraiture; having its chief literary merit in an agreeable style, it proceeds with the cold indifference of a writer who is conscious that his tale is an allegory. The outward world can scarce be said to exist; we are in the realm of religious ideas, supernatural forces of light and darkness, of whose struggle the visible universe is merely a symbol. Accepting this conception, the story is devoid of depth; in this drama the actors are as mechanical as the properties; the reader asks himself whether the creator of the play aimed at any end higher than the production of a fashionable novel. If such was his purpose, the task was a success. The prose style permitted the supposition, encouraged by the tenor of the narrative, that it was entitled to the credit of history; incorporation with the adventures of Lancelot favored its authority; while, in return, the attraction of the new romance extended the influence of a body of fiction capable equally of gratifying sentimental taste and appealing to religious austerity. In such manner, and through popular preference for masses over details, for myth above character, the fame of Galahad came to supersede that of the more human Perceval."

It has been especially in modern English literature that the romance has exercised influence. This effect has been attained in virtue of the enthusiasm of Malory, in whose abstract the tale assumed a freshness not to be found in his French original, and from whom the narrative passed into the hands of Tennyson, in whose beautiful lines it came to represent quite a different order of ethical ideas.

NOTE. — Already has been mentioned the discussion of R. Heinzel, "Über die Französischen Gralramane," in the *Denkschriften d. Kais. Akad. d. Wiss.*, Philhist. Classe, vol. xl. iii., Vienna, 1892. — In my *King Arthur and the Table Round, tales chiefly after the Old French of Crestien of Troyes*, 2 vols., Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston and New York, 1897, I have given a version of some of the important passages of the *Queste* after the text of Furnivall. In this text is an important error; the name of Joseph is substituted for that of Josephe (son of Joseph) as celebrant of the mass before the Grail, at the advent of Galahad. It seems plain that the writer of the *Queste* knew and used the *Grand St. Graal*, which must therefore be considered as the earlier work; the relation extends to the language of the passage. — The Portuguese *Demanda* has been partly edited by K. v. Reinhardstoettner, Berlin, 1889 (but only to the extent of one volume). An opinion has been expressed that the Portuguese work represents an older form of the *Queste*. This view is examined and rejected by Heinzel, pp. 162-171. So far as the *Demanda* has been printed, it seems to correspond closely to the *Queste*, with the interpolation of extraneous matter, partly after the data of the romance of Tristan; such manner of expansion is quite in the usual line of later versions of a story, and no reason has been given which requires the modern reader to take any other view. — For the Latin of Helinandus, see A. Nutt, *Studies on the Legend of the Holy Grail*, pp. 52, 53.

AN account has been given of the evolution of the legend in French romance. Before proceeding with an account of the forms taken by the legend outside the limits of the French language, it may be advisable to offer remarks on the manner of development of mediæval romances, and on the characteristics which ordinarily belong to the later versions of a tale as compared with earlier forms of the same story. In a literary cycle such as the Arthurian, it is first of all to be noted, that as the compositions are generally works of conscious art, so the manner adopted by the reconstructor in dealing with his material depends on his own choice, and is subject to the greatest variation. As an imitator, he may follow the data of his original with slavish precision, or, as a recaster, may use the greatest freedom in his rendering, to an extent which renders his production essentially a new work: he may expand the narration to inordinate length, or may abstract its situations, or omit certain of its episodes; he may confine himself to the *dramatis personæ* supplied by him, or may ornament his work with a wholly new set of proper names; he may, in short, use all the freedom which a modern dramatist may employ with regard to the treatment of a non-copyrighted theme. Furthermore, if he himself is not a cultured person, and if he is obliged to receive his suggestions at second-hand, he may exhibit all the variations and misunderstandings which naturally result from the intervention of a third mind; or he may seize on certain floating ideas and general notions, and so construct an independent novelette, which may thus be intermediate between the character of an original flight of imagination and an adaptation of a celebrated production. Mediæval authors enjoyed the greater freedom in this respect, because books were rare; and, unless the romancer belonged to the highest literary circles, his use of his material was not likely to be questioned, and he stood in little danger of indictment for plagiarism. The forms likely to be taken by variations are therefore infinite, and the imagination of the writer is not easily to be limited by definite rules. Nevertheless, speaking generally, some observations may be offered on the criteria characterizing later versions of a story.

(1.) The natural course likely to be taken by a narrative was gradual expansion. Beginning, perhaps, as a brief poem capable of being concluded within the time of a single recitation, it would receive rapid increment in two ways. On the one hand, the additions would be external; prefaces would represent the *enfances* of

the hero, or would lay the basis of the tale in an earlier generation by recounting the fortunes of his parents : on the other, the brief history would be thought worthy of a sequel carrying on the activity of the main performer. As the authors contributing these extensions would usually be persons of moderate imagination, they would be apt to carry out their narrative by frequent repetition of the ideas and motives furnished by their original. Examples of such process have been shown in the continuations of the *Perceval*, elaborate fictions in which misunderstandings of an incomplete original furnished no small part of the matter. Supposing several such prefaces to exist in the case of any one work, then the critic should first of all consider whether the main situations, and especially the proper names, exhibit agreement : if so, he would infer that the various improvers had a single source no longer extant ; but if the outlines differed, he would suppose that the several authors were guided solely by their respective whims. To trifling agreements in detail, in the face of general independence, he should not attach much consequence, because such resemblances would probably be found explainable as common inferences drawn from situations in the original, which the several authors had understood, or misunderstood, in a similar manner.

(2.) The story grows also internally, by the continued interpolation of new episodes. In virtue of such increase, the tale would require to be separated into portions capable of separate recital, and in this way opportunity would be offered for rearrangement of the various episodes. So long as the narrative was unwritten, this process would proceed freely ; the record of the fiction would interpose difficulties, but not put an entire stop to this manner of evolution. If one tale be found to contain as its foundation epic material belonging to another, while including also new matter intercalated between the divisions of the story, it may be taken as certain that the former is a recast based on the latter.

(3.) The portions of a mediæval romance, as already noted, usually consist of independent episodes very loosely connected. On the part of an editor or imitator, it is natural to endeavor to bring these separate sections in closer relationship. One way of accomplishing this is by uniting the characters of the action in the ties of a common genealogy. Sometimes, in place of minor personages who are unknown or unrelated to the action, the reviser prefers to introduce characters with whom the readers or hearers are otherwise acquainted. The effort to connect, in either of these ways, one part of a story with the rest of the plot, or with the expectations of the audience, indicates a later production.

(4.) The subsequent and probably more sophisticated author,

finding the task of winning the sympathies of his audience a harder one, and under the obligation of surpassing in some way the attraction of the earlier work, commonly tries to do so by the accumulation of marvel and fantastic situations. In this cycle, at least, the progress of time is accompanied with a tendency toward wilder and wilder fiction. While the earlier poet was able to be more direct, and more in accord with the manners of his time and the realities of life, his successors become more and more romantic.

(5.) Where the reconstructor works for the people, he is strongly tempted to introduce into the action primitive elements which are already familiar to the people and likely to attract their attention. On the other hand, in his hands the psychology and human interest of the older author is likely to meet with complete shipwreck. From this relation it follows that no rule can be more incorrect than the canon of critical judgment, continually employed even by distinguished scholars, which measures the relative antiquity of two compositions according to the degree of barbarism which the plot may seem to exhibit. To use a figure which I have elsewhere employed, the pure gold of literature, falling into the baser metal of an earlier stratum of thought, ordinarily becomes an amalgam. In this case, the style and sentiment of the piece constitute a much better guide to its antiquity than do the facts of the action.

(6.) Where a work known to be of later date and in general correspondent to an earlier production contains certain independent features, the inference must be that these features result from the freely creative activity of the later author. The burden of proof lies on the critic who endeavors to prove the contrary; and in making this essay he must appeal to minds likely to be skeptical, and his failure to convince these doubters must be held to indicate the failure of the argument. In general, the existence of a celebrated work, like the appearance of a higher race of animals, has the effect of obliterating the intermediate steps by which it rose; earlier and inferior works are forgotten and pass away in the new radiance. The development, if it continues, now starts from a new centre; the lines of tradition converge toward the masterpiece, and are drawn through, as through a ring; subsequent divergences proceed from the fancy and pleasure of improvers who work on the lines of the new composition, and trust their own invention for its alteration; it is only in exceptional cases, and particularly where the material has had a long unwritten national currency, that parallel lines interweave with the process; ordinarily, it is useless to search beyond the new creation, or to expect the survival, in its variations, of any ancient remains which may throw light on the method of its production. In particular, where a generally close connection is admitted,



to assume the occasional influence of an early source is ordinarily only the self-deception of misapplied ingenuity, as the arguments by which such discovery is supported are apt to be characterized by sophistry. Broad common sense will usually pay attention to the outlines of the plot, as sufficiently indicating the relation, and lay little stress on the citation of minute variations. Learning, when employed to exhibit petty divergencies, is apt to become an organon, not for discovery, but for demonstration; with adequately minute erudition, any theory whatever can be triumphantly demonstrated.

#### TRANSLATIONS OF THE PERCEVAL OF CRESTIEN.

For two centuries the work of the trouvère continued to enjoy a European popularity; during that time, a cultivated reader in any country would have had no difficulty in obtaining access to the romance, while an outline of the situations might easily have fallen within the cognizance of unlettered persons. A Flemish rendering bears date of 1350.

The work of a Norse translator is rendered noteworthy by the freedom used in separating into two tales the two parts of the romance, relating respectively to Perceval (Parceval in the saga) and Gawain (Valver). The renderer chose to complete the former story by adding a brief preface and sequel of his own. In regard to the nature and functions of the dish or grail, he fell into complete confusion, misspelling the word, and also misinterpreting it. His error shows that a foreigner, acquainted only with Crestien's tale, would not be likely to comprehend the term.

#### THE PARZIVAL OF WOLFRAM.

An unlettered Franconian minstrel produced the most interesting of mediæval German epic poems. Wolfram of Eschenbach, who could neither read nor write, disclaimed for his work the title of book; nevertheless, his composition is essentially a product of conscious art, being indeed characterized by a style of peculiar individuality. The poet had a considerable knowledge of contemporary French literature, which he must have acquired by listening to reading aloud, while his own poetry must have been dictated in sections to an amanuensis. The task was undertaken in the early years of the thirteenth century; the character of the introductory part shows that, before giving out any portion of the work, the author had mentally elaborated the entire complicated plot.

That Wolfram could on occasion be a free romancer, and that he possessed sufficient fancy to make up a story on the base of vague suggestions, is shown by the fragments of his *Titirel*. In these the treatment is as wildly romantic as the theme; in order to recover the

jewelled leash of a hound for a lady who sets her hand as the price of the achievement, the hero sets out on a task understood to be attendant with danger. The idea may probably have been borrowed from some French story, like that of the "Mule sans frein," in which a knight is sent to a (fairy) castle in order to procure a magic bridle; but the details of the action could have had no origin save in the ready invention of the minnesinger. Into this tale Wolfram introduced many of the new proper names, obviously of his own devising, which occur in the Parzival, and even extended the number of such personages; the verse, therefore, was either subsequent to the more epic production, or, at all events, composed after the plan of the latter had been completed. It does not appear that the poet perfected any considerable part of his new undertaking; it is likely that his good sense perceived the inadequacy of the thin thread of dramatic movement, too slender to allow of sustained interest.

In an account of the poem of Crestien, it has been explained that the work consists of two portions nearly unrelated. The story of Perceval leaves the education complete in arms, love, and ethical insight; the hero is thus prepared for the accomplishment of his part in the action, but the incompleteness of the poem makes his future activity entirely conjectural. On the other hand, the adventures of Gawain break off in the midst of an undecided quarrel, leaving the knight still under the obligation of performing a series of tasks, concerning which conjecture cannot offer the least ray of light. Even after the accomplishment of these duties, it would still be necessary for the poet to interweave the strands of his narration, and unite the interests of the two heroes in a single scheme; respecting the nature of this intent, no contemporary had the least inkling. Wolfram was familiar with the tale of Crestien, but either did not know, or else preferred to ignore, the task of the continuators; he was therefore left to finish the history in his own manner, and proceeded to cut the Gordian knot in a very summary fashion. The proposed combat he ended by a reconciliation; the remaining duties of Gawain he altogether overlooked, and went on directly to the task of combining the sections of the narrative, and bringing the two chief actors into relation. For this purpose he had recourse to an expedient borrowed from another poem of Crestien (that relating to Yvain); Gawain is made to meet his friend Parzival without recognition, and to fight with him an undecided battle, terminated by discovery. In Wolfram's mind, Parzival has not yet accomplished sufficient to pass for a hero of the Grail; he has indeed proved himself the peer of the best knight of Christendom, but heathenness remains (just as we find contemporary French romancers disposed to introduce into the Grail legend the heathen

world). For the purpose, Wolfram can hit on nothing better than to repeat the idea of an accidental encounter; Parzival is made to meet his pagan half brother, a king of India. Poetic necessity being thus satisfied, nothing remains but to have Cundrie, the Grail-maiden, conduct the brothers to Munsalvæsche, where Parzival is at last able to put the required question, and is recognized with joy as the destined healer of the sick Anfortas, whose successor he becomes. The conclusion requires an introduction; provision must be made for bringing on the scene this half brother. Accordingly, in a first book (to employ, for the sake of convenience, such modern division), the poet makes Gahmuret, as servant of the caliph (the Baruch in Wolfram's nomenclature), meet a heathen queen, with whom he has a temporary alliance, and who bears him a son, of color checkered between white and black. Deserting Belakane, Gahmuret proceeds to Waleis (Wolfram's transliteration of Gales, Wales, a country which to him was in the air), where he marries Herzeloide, and himself ultimately falls in the cause of the caliph, leaving the widow to bring up her son Parzival, whom she endeavors to keep from knowledge of the chivalry which has cost her so dear.

In these ingenious additions, there appears to be nothing which need be supposed beyond the powers of Wolfram's own invention. The proper names, as seems to me, are quite enough to show that no French author had part in the composition, as indeed the entire action seems eminently characteristic of a German poet.

The portion of the poem which answers to Crestien's work exhibits several of those features noted as characteristic of later narratives. The persons are brought into relation by a complicated genealogical system; the parts of the action are carefully interwoven. Romantic episodes are introduced; thus Crestien introduces a lady who is mourning over her slain lover, and from whom the hero learns the mistake which he has made in failing to put the required inquiry; pleased with the situation, at a later time Wolfram shows us this damsel in the character of a nun of love, and at last exhibits a glimpse of her person as laid in death beside her lover. The Frenchman represents his youthful hero as listening with pleasure to the singing of birds in the forest; the German romantically represents the ambition of the childish Parzival as awakened by these songs. In the French, the mother counsels her departing son to observe the main rules of chivalry, to serve ladies, obey elders, and adore God. With the minnesinger, the advice becomes more extravagant; cautioned to avoid the attempt to ford streams which are not clear, the youth, literally obedient, keeps on one side of a runlet. The honor of wedded love is expressed in the

elevation of the heroine to the rank of wife, under the symbolic name of *Condwiramurs*. Misinterpretation plays a considerable part; as already remarked, errors in the understanding of pronouns cause the maimed relation whom *Perceval* was bound to relieve to be converted from a cousin to an uncle, while a like error causes the youth to be represented as learning his name from his cousin, instead of communicating it to her. In these cases it is evident that the writer has reflected on the French text; and in the biography, with an exception presently to be noted, there is no alteration of importance not capable of such explanation.

In spite of this obvious relation, the German poet tells a different story: in order to defend himself against the charge of erroneous translation, he affirms that he has derived his version of the tale, not from *Crestien*, but from a Provençal minstrel, a certain *Kiot*, composing in French. While in *Anjou*, the latter had obtained his information from an Arabic book written before the Christian era by a certain *Flegetanis*, who on his part had come to a knowledge of history in virtue of his astrological knowledge. It appears quite unnecessary to take such statement as serious, or as anything more than one of the inaccurate pretences regarding the sources of their narratives usually employed by mediæval authors.

If, however, in the biographical story, *Wolfram* has in general followed the *trouvère*, the case is quite different in regard to the portion of the poem relating to the Grail. It has been shown that in the work of *Crestien* the dish occupies a subordinate and indeed accidental position, while in the later French romances it becomes the centre of the action. Now in the poem of *Wolfram* we find a series of representations which correspond to these later compositions.

(1.) In the *Parzival*, as in the French prose romances, the Grail is made the symbol of a spiritual kingdom intended for the hero of the story. (2.) It is defined as the essence of all that is desirable, as that which grants the fulfilment of human wishes; corresponding is the definition of *Robert de Boron*. (3.) It is kept in a temple attached to the palace of *Anfortas*, the maimed relative whom the hero is to relieve; just so, in the *Queste*, its place is in a chapel belonging to the palace of the Fisher King. (4.) In this temple, apparently, it remains on the altar as the centre of a daily service; such is the description in the poem of *Robert*, where, as above set forth, it answers to the eucharistic chalice. (5.) It magically supplies the household with food; so in the later French romances, but not in *Crestien*. (6.) Each banqueter receives such fare as he may desire: an approach to this conception appears in the *Queste*, where the Grail is said to supply all that is desirable; but in the French

work the underlying symbolism is apparent. (7.) The Grail has a curative property, and sufferers are kept alive by its influence. In the same manner, the insane Lancelot, in the French prose romance, recovers his sanity from the Grail; and in the *Queste* we read how a sick knight is healed by its apparition. (8.) It is invisible to unbelievers. In the *Queste* the sinful Lancelot loses his sight in consequence of beholding the vessel, and in the *Pellesvaus* it refuses to appear to Lancelot. (9.) It gives oracles which guide the conduct of its votaries; these are furnished by letters of light visible on the rim of the Grail. In the *Joseph of Arimathæa*, also, the course of the servants of the Grail is guided by oracles which it furnishes, either by means of a voice from heaven, or letters brought from heaven by an angel. (10.) The service of the Grail requires celibacy; with Robert de Boron and the French prose romances, celibacy is a requisite to the highest excellence. That Wolfram excepts the king of the Grail is plainly an inconsistency of his own. (11.) The agreement extends to at least one name: Wolfram calls the castle *Munsalvæsche*, and the country *Terre de Salvæsche*; in the poem of Robert we read that the personages of the action are to meet in the vales of *Avaron* (read *Avalon*, that is to say, *Glastonbury*); this is described as a savage country: —

En la terre vers Occident  
Ki est sauvage durement  
Es vaus d'Avaron.

(12.) The author of the history translated by Kiot is said to be the astrologer *Flegetanis*. In the *Grand St. Graal*, among personages connected with the race of kings of the Grail is a queen *Flegetine* (or *Flegentine*); the resemblance may be accidental, or the sound may have caught the ear of Wolfram, and served as the basis of his name.

The correspondences pointed out, certainly, cannot be considered as the result of independent developments. On the other hand, the story of Wolfram offers features which seem a result of the reaction of his own fancy. Thus, like the prose *Galahad* romances, he names a series of kings of the Grail; but not only the names differ, but also the country: Wolfram makes these sovereigns belong to the race of *Anjou*; in the choice of this province, he was doubtless influenced by the fame of the *Plantagenets*. So, as already noted, he makes the servants of the Grail constitute an order of *Templars*, who with the lance defend against intruders the passes of their country. These are dispatched to relieve lands in a state of anarchy, while the damsels, also by the divine mandate chosen from many lands, supply wives for the kings of the earth. The exigencies of the poet's plot, and also his high estimate of wedlock, induce him to relax the rules of the order in favor of its sovereign.

More remarkable is Wolfram's ignorance as to the nature of the Grail itself. As already shown, French romances waver between identification with the chalice of the Last Supper and the dish of the Paschal lamb. Wolfram has no idea that the Grail is a vessel of any sort; he takes it to be simply a jewel, apparently flat in form, which derives its power from an oblate deposited on Good Friday by a dove from heaven. This gem, originally in charge of the rebel angels, had been finally committed to kings of Anjou. Had Wolfram known of the Grail as a sacred dish, it would seem unlikely that he should have omitted that feature.

Wolfram identifies the Grail with the precious stone against which the phoenix rubs itself, and by the heat of which it is consumed; the name of the jewel, he says, was *lapsit* (i. e. *lapis*) *exillis*. This heat-producing stone is mentioned in the *Grand St. Graal* (but the bird is called *Serpilion*, evidently only a name of the phoenix); the gem is named *pirastite* (or *piratiste*). Wolfram must have had in mind some such appellation, and his corruption leaves no longer recognizable the original significance of the name. In the French romance, the introduction of the bird is symbolic, the phoenix being from patristic times the type of Christ; but there is nothing to show that the German poet intended to convey any mystic conception.

The correspondences pointed out allow only one conclusion: Wolfram must have received information, very likely of a piecemeal and inadequate character, concerning contemporary French romances dealing with the history of the Grail; the ideas thus obtained he treated with free imagination, and introduced as much as he saw fit into the framework of Crestien's narrative. In this manner the minnesinger was able to produce a composition as immortal as the story of which it is essentially an interpretation. As I have elsewhere remarked, the difference between the style and spirit of the two works is to be explained, not as a token of the superiority of the German poet, but rather as "the contrast in taste of a generation consciously romantic to that of a more epic predecessor: Crestien describes education in chivalry, of which the essential duties are charity and piety; Wolfram enlarges, but also blurs, the outlines of the action in favor of a presentation typically human."

#### HEINRICH VOM TÜRLIN.

About 1220, that is to say, somewhat more than a decade after Wolfram, an admirer and imitator of the latter, Heinrich of the Türlin, composed a poem of thirty thousand lines, reciting adventures of Gawein (Gawain). The fantastic character of the work illustrates the tendency of German romance, inclining to greater and greater extravagance. Heinrich was acquainted with the *Perceval* of Cres-

tien and its first continuation; in addition, he used other French Arthurian compositions, among these "Mule sans frein," "Lai du Corn," and "Lai du Mantel" (or variants of the extant lays). From this material, together with reminiscences of classical mythology, German folk-lore, and an abundant employment of free fancy, Heinrich produced an independent poem, called by him the *Krone*, which he pretended to have rendered from a French original; the tale he supplied with an outfit of proper names, in great measure of his own invention.

In the long narrative, the concluding and principal exploit is the discovery of the Grail. For the history, suggestions were contributed by the narrative of Crestien, abundantly altered and interpolated. In order to weave together the parts of his rambling and incoherent story, he followed a frequent practice of recasters by bringing the chief characters into relations of kinship. Thus, in the earlier portion of the tale, the hero is made to enter into a permanent love relation with a certain Amurfina (the hint for whose personality is taken from the story of "Mule sans frein"); having occasion to introduce the enchanter who, in Crestien's account, constructs the castle of Igera (called by Wolfram Clinschor). Heinrich represents him as a priest and magician, uncle of Amurfina, named Gansguoter, who, after the death of Uter Pandragon, has bespelled Igern (Igera), King Arthur's mother, by his playing on the viol, and built for her a castle. It is while undergoing an attack in a hostile castle (the *Cavalon* of Crestien) that Gawain is laid under obligation to find the Grail, or return within a year (the author is careful not to lay himself under the necessity of making his hero revisit the spot, as in the French tale he is bound to do); in this manner is introduced a quest of the Grail, which occupies the final part of the narration. The writer sees fit to complicate his inconsequent fiction by requiring the seeker of the Grail to carry certain amulets, namely, a ring given Arthur by *Vrou Saelde* (a German replica of the Latin *Fortuna*), the gem of a girdle granting invincibility, and magic gloves; these requirements give opportunity for long episodes, are stolen, and recovered with the aid of the benevolent Gansguoter. In the course of adventures, the hero reaches the abode of an unnamed sister of Gansguoter (and consequently aunt of Amurfina), qualified as a goddess, from whom he receives directions in regard to his behavior when he shall arrive in the castle of the Grail; he is to avoid somnolence, and to ask a question concerning the Grail. Gawain, now accompanied by *Lanzelet* (Lancelot) and *Calocreant* (the *Calogrenant* of Crestien, *Colgrevice* of Malory), is presently conducted to the hall of his quest, where he is welcomed by an old man lying on a couch, who

offers a seat at his side, and listens to his guest's recital of experiences. The meal is served, and the hall crowded with knights, ladies, and attendants; at the banquet a lady and knight sit side by side. A youth brings in a sword, which he lays before the host; cup-bearers offer wine, which Gawain declines. After sewers with dishes, a procession enters; two maids with candles are followed by two varlets bearing a spear; two other maids bring a golden plate; another, what seems to be a knife; while the last of the train, who wears a crown, carries a reliquary of gold and precious stones; Gawain, looking at her face, recognizes the sister of Gansguoter, the same who had directed him as to his duty. The spear exudes drops of blood, which fall into the plate above which it has been placed. The pix is set on the table, and, when the lid is removed, appears to contain bread (presumably an oblate), of which a portion is eaten by the host. Gawain's companions have fallen asleep, but he himself remains awake, and puts the question, asking in God's name what the wonders signify. At the word arises a shout of joy; Gawain is informed that he has accomplished the adventure in which Parzival has failed, and set at liberty the inmates of the castle, living and dead; for it now appears that only the ladies are alive, the host and his male company being no better than ghosts, who by grace of God are once a year allowed this repast. Concerning the Grail, Gawain is told that it is allowable to tell no more, and receives as a present the sword. The host and his retinue, together with the Grail, vanish, and Gawain is left with the ladies. Gawain and Lancelot bid adieu, on their way find Kay, and after half a year arrive at Karidol (Carlisle), where is held a splendid feast.

This remarkable tale constitutes a curious pendant to the poem of Wolfram, as an example of the manner in which a facile but commonplace novelist was capable of varying the theme, with the intent of constructing a popular fiction. The verse, equally wanting in poetic and psychologic merit, has interest only for scholars, and as giving an example of contemporary taste. As the story is obviously artificial, self-conscious, and in great measure the invention of the author, there is no reason to suppose that the variations of the history had any other source than in the good pleasure of Heinrich himself. It is, therefore, to be considered as merely a turn of his own imagination, that the Grail is conceived as a pix instead of as a dish; that the master of the castle takes the place of his father as the person nourished from the sacred vessel; and that by a wild flight of fantasy the same personage is described as an uneasy spirit compelled to forego the rest of the grave, until set free by the successful achiever of the quest. For the rest, the



manner in which the poet weaves together the independent sections of the tale is a sort of forecast of the way in which Wagner finally chose to do so.

#### THE LATER TITUREL

To a certain Albrecht of Scharfenburg, composing in the latter part of the thirteenth century, belongs the discredit of leaving one of the most unreadable productions known to literature. As an imitator of Wolfram of Eschenbach, he appropriated all the worst features of the minnesinger's style, together with intolerable affectations of his own. His imagination was adequate to add new features to the conception of the Grail; this he described as a jewel, after the manner of Wolfram, but also as wrought into the shape of a vessel, used by Joseph of Arimathæa; an allusion showing his acquaintance with that romance, or its offshoots.

#### PEREDUR

The story received treatment also in Wales; a tale of Peredur, son of Evrawc, is contained in the Red Book of Hergest, a collection written in the latter part of the fourteenth century. The problem of the relation of this story to the French of Crestien derives interest from the common hypothesis that the history, like other Arthurian narratives, was ultimately of Celtic origin. The question must be answered chiefly from a comparison of the outline of the plots. In the following abstract, intended to elucidate this connection, numerals are used to indicate sections of the tale correspondent to the French, and letters to show those which are original with the Welsh author. Minor additions of the Welshman are indicated by brackets.

A. A brief introduction narrates that Evrawc, earl of the North (that is, North Britain), with six sons, is slain in combats of chivalry. The widow, in order to keep her remaining child from knowledge of arms, with an unwarlike company retires to the desert, where the boy is brought up in ignorance of knightly weapons, but acquires skill in throwing sharpened staves. His character is marked by extreme simplicity; on one occasion, he mistakes hornless deer for goats, and, to the wonder of beholders, by speed of foot drives them to the goat-house.

I. The narration closely follows the outlines of Crestien's tale. Peredur meets in the forest knights, whom his mother declares are angels. He inquires the use of their arms, and resolves to become a knight; his mother, informed of his purpose, grieves, but finally consents, and gives him counsels; he plunges into the wood, and in a tent finds a lady, whom he kisses, from whom he takes a ring, and

by whose lover he is pursued; he rudely rides into the court, is recognized as the flower of chivalry by a dwarf and a maiden (here also a dwarf), who are therefore assaulted by Kei; he kills a knight who, has stolen a cup from Arthur, and dons the armor, with the aid of a member of the household (here Owain), by whom he sends back the cup, but declines to return to court until he has avenged the insult committed to those under his protection. (Within a week he overthrows sixteen knights, and sends them to court with the same message.) He reaches the house of a teacher (here an uncle), by whom he is knighted, with an injunction to put no questions concerning the remarkable things he may behold; he reaches another castle (of a second uncle), where he sees carried through the hall a bleeding spear and a salver (containing a man's head). He departs, and encounters in the wood, mourning over the body of a slain lover, a lady (his foster-sister), from whom he learns that he has been the cause of his own mother's death. (He compels the slayer to marry the bereaved lady, and sends the couple to Arthur's court; the king determines to go in search of Peredur.) He comes to the castle of a beleaguered damsel, who visits him at night to implore protection, and whom he succors by successively overthrowing the officers of the assailant, and that enemy himself. (Nothing is said of a love affair.) He meets the knight of the tent, defeats him, and reconciles him to the lady whose ring he has taken.

B. He vanquishes one of the cannibal witches of Gloucester, and visits the home of the witches, by whom he is taught chivalry and supplied with arms.

II. The narrative continues in close parallelism to the French tale, narrating how Peredur approaches the camp of Arthur, who, as above noted, is in search of him; how, at the sight of blood-drops on snow, he falls into a love revery; in this state he overthrows Kei, but is gently accosted by Gwalchmei (Gawain), and conducted into the presence of the king and queen.

C. Independent episodes recite the love adventures of Peredur while at Arthur's court. On the day of his arrival, forgetful of the lady whose beauty he had remembered in his muse, at first sight he falls in love with Angharad of the Golden Hand, and makes a vow never to speak until she shall bestow on him her favor. He accomplishes feats of valor, conquering giants and slaying a serpent; he becomes so wasted by sorrow that he is changed past recognition, and at court goes by the name of the Dumb Youth, who distinguishes himself in joust. Angharad relents, and Peredur discloses his identity; but after this success, the lady suddenly disappears from the action.

D. A long chapter deals with a new love affair. While Peredur

is in search of the gold-producing stone to be found in the tail of a serpent, respecting which he has received information from a malevolent personage called the Black Oppressor, he has occasion to destroy an Addanc, or water-monster, in which he is aided by a mysterious lady who appears to him on a mound, and bestows another stone, which has the property of conferring invisibility, on condition of love service. Thus assisted, he kills the serpent and gets the auriferous stone, which, however, together with the hand of a lady deserved by feats of arms, he bestows on a follower. He wanders to a place where is in progress a tournament, of which the prize is the hand of the Empress of Constantinople, a beauty of whom he forthwith becomes enamored, and who turns out to be the very person to whom he had sworn allegiance; during fourteen years he lives with the empress, who imitates the example of her predecessor in a sudden and permanent retirement from the scene.

III. We now have a continuation of the tale as in Crestien, — the denunciation before Arthur by the ugly maiden, who reproaches Peredur for his neglect to put the question which would have restored his uncle, the lame king; the announcement of various adventures to be performed by Arthur's knights, and the accusation of murder brought against Gwalchmei; the journey of the latter; the attack of the commons on the visitor; his defence with a chessboard-shield; his succor by the daughter of his feudal enemy, and release on the promise to return in a year: the writer assures us that his source was silent concerning the conclusion of this adventure. On Good Friday he comes to a hermit, who rebukes him for wearing arms on that day, and with whom he spends Easter (the hermit directs him to a palace where he may obtain information as to the Castle of Wonders (*i. e.* that of the Lame King, in which was kept the bleeding lance).

E. A brief episode describes how Peredur becomes a prisoner, and is assisted by the daughter of his jailer to appear incognito in a tournament, where he obtains distinction.

IV. The adventures of Peredur now follow the lines of Crestien's second continuator: we read of the castle of the self-playing chessmen, belonging to a lady called an empress; the quest of the head of a stag; the loan of a hound for this purpose; the theft of this dog, and the encounter with the knight of a tomb, who disappears; the adventure is uncompleted, and the lady of the chessboard, like her predecessors, drops out of the action.

F. The tale is cut short by a brief conclusion. Peredur a second time reaches the Castle of Wonders, where he finds Gwalchmei, and takes his seat beside his maimed relative (nothing is said of the question). It turns out that the bleeding lance was the weapon

with which the witches of Gloucester had slain the cousin whose head he had seen on the platter; the same enemies had also maimed his uncle. On the hero, therefore, devolves the duty of blood-vengeance, accomplished with the aid of Arthur. It is further explained that the various enemies encountered by Peredur, including the black maiden who had denounced him, were in reality the transformations of a cousin (who, as is implied, had thus acted the part of a benevolent fairy desirous to move the youth to perform his duty as avenger).

The sketch now given shows that the story consists of the plot of Crestien and his continuator as the groundwork into which is injected unrelated matter. According to an observation above made, such process of intercalation is an invariable mark of the expansion of a narrative.

The inference thence arising is converted into certainty by the consideration that the work throughout contains numerous and long verbal renderings from the French poem. Mistranslations occur; in several places it is obvious that the Welshman had in mind the longer and clearer French original, which his abbreviation has confused.

As to the names of the principal characters, the writer merely followed the usual Welsh practice in assigning to personages presumed to be of British origin appellations suitably British in sound. This process is naively illustrated by the remarks of the Welsh translator of the *Pellesvaus*: "And let the readers of this book excuse me for not being able to find Welsh names for the French ones, or for putting them as I am able; but this I know, that the name of the warrior that is commended here in French is *Penefressvo Galeif*, which is equivalent in Welsh to *Peredur*."

As for the interpolated matter, the greater part consists of chivalric fancies quite out of the line of old Welsh saga, while some portion is genuinely ancient. Thus the idea that the obstacles encountering the hero may turn out to be the creation of benevolently disposed fairies, or other supernatural personages, is a feature frequently appearing in Irish literature and folk-lore. But as these features are obviously insertions of the Welsh author, the origin of such additions is a question perfectly irrelevant to the present issue.

The language, costume, and character of the tale belong to Welsh romantic literature of the fourteenth century, penetrated as that literature was with the spirit of French romance. The treatment exhibits that increasing extravagance already noted as belonging to the later taste. The advice of the mother to seize food, steal jewels, and court a woman against her will, is merely a travesty of the

tender and truthful passage of the French poet. By an inconsistency, the teacher who knights Peredur is made to give instruction only in cudgel-playing (the idea is borrowed from a line of Crestien, who makes Perceval say that he has been used to play single-stick with cowboys). Having thus acquired one third of his force, in a visit to a second uncle (his maimed relative), Peredur learns the use of the sword, and acquires a second third of his strength; it seems to me obvious that the narration of the *trouvère* is mangled, with the intent of assimilating the plot to that of folk-tales familiar to uninstructed readers.

In contrast to the petrification of the story is the introduction of romantic traits belonging to the fourteenth rather than the twelfth century. Thus Peredur, instead of tearing away the ring obtained from the maiden of the tent, is made to kneel and humbly represent, "My mother told me, wheresoever I saw a fair jewel to take it." Where, in this scene is the roughness of the savage youth armed with a wooden fork, with which he is absurdly depicted as killing an armed knight? The effort on the one hand to be decent, on the other to appear primitive, has worked havoc with the psychology of the tale.

The conclusion is, that in the Welsh story we have an example of the manner in which a later and foreign author may alter a refined composition into a set of extravagant and meaningless adventures.

As for the Grail, the recaster may be excused for the omission of a feature concerning which he doubtless had no more distinct idea than had the Norse translator of the Perceval.

#### SIR PERCEVELLE.

In English verse of the fourteenth century, the story of Perceval received a treatment which differs from that last noticed, inasmuch as the recast was no literary production, deliberately created by a self-conscious artist writing pen in hand, but the work of some unlettered minstrel, who produced his tale for recitation, and who may probably have obtained his material from the oral relation of imperfectly instructed informants.

I. A knight named Percevelle obtains the hand of Arthur's sister, Acheflour; in a tournament held at the christening of his son, also named Percvelle, he is slain by the Red Knight. The widow, desirous to keep her son from knowledge of warfare, retires to the desert with one maiden and a troop of goats. She carries also a throwing-spear for the use of the boy, who becomes expert in its use. His mother having bidden him to worship God, he employs his time in seeking his unknown benefactor.

II. The story proceeds according to the plot of Crestien. Per-

cevelle learns from knights, whom he takes for gods, that he may obtain knighthood from Arthur. His mother, grieved at first, consents, and gives him counsels, namely, to be "of measure" (to be reasonable), and to greet a knight, whom he is to know by the minever in his dress. Percevelle finds a maid, whom he kisses, and with whom he changes rings; in order to be "of measure," he measures out the food he finds. He rides rudely into the hall of Arthur, who perceives the family likeness; he slays with his dart the Red Knight, who has stolen a cup from the king's board (thus unconsciously avenging his father). Being unable to strip the corpse, he is assisted by one of the household (here Gawain), and sends back the cup, but refuses to return to court.

III. He meets the mother of the Red Knight, a witch, who mistakes the youth for her son, whose wounds she declares her ability to heal; Percevelle casts her into the fire he had kindled.

IV. He sees a horseman dressed in minever, whom he therefore, according to his mother's advice, desires to greet; but this rider, recognizing only the arms of the Red Knight, flies, until Percevelle overtakes him, and informs him of the death of the latter.

V. While the hero is at the house of this (unrecognized) uncle, a messenger arrives from the Maiden's Land, desiring aid for Queen Lufamour, who is besieged by the sultan Gollerothrame. Percevelle resorts thither, and defeats the men of the oppressor. King Arthur comes up, and Gawain and Percevelle engage in an encounter, ended by the former recognizing "the fool of the field." In a single combat, the hero slays the sultan. In this engagement we have a curious trait: the simple youth, who is still ignorant of the use of the sword, does not know how to kill his overthrown antagonist, until Gawain bids him dismount from his horse; as Percevelle has hitherto heard these animals described only as mares, he is puzzled, and falls into an untimely philological revery, which comes near being fatal. His steed swerves and saves him, the sultan is killed, and Percevelle weds Lufamour.

VI. After a year, Percevelle thinks it necessary to go in search of his mother. In the wood he meets the lady with whom he had changed rings, and reconciles her to her incensed lover, the Black Knight, an old enemy of his father: he returns the stolen ring, and wishes to obtain once more that given in exchange, his mother's present, but the latter has passed into the hands of a giant, whom Percevelle kills; he learns from the porter that the giant had been a suitor of his mother, who had become distraught at the sight of her son's ring as a probable evidence of Percevelle's death. He therefore resumes his goatskin dress and resorts to the forest, where he is able to find his mother, whom he restores by a magic draught.

The two then return to the Maiden's Land, and Percevelle lives happily with Lufamour until he departs to the Holy Land, where he ends his days.

This curious example of a popular rhymed novellette of the fourteenth century assuredly can boast no more remote antiquity. The love story may very well be explained as made up under the influence of suggestions indirectly obtained from the extant French poem, and the style and proper names correspond to such supposition. A lingering remnant of the portion of Crestien's story, relating to the unasked question, may be found in the untimely reverie of the hero. That the knight of the cup should be represented as the slayer of Percevelle's father is entirely in the manner of a reconstructor; that the vengeance is unintentional, and even unknown, shows that the feature is not ancient.

A considerable number of verbal coincidences attest the connection with the French verse, which is further made clear by the proper name of the hero, Sir Percevelle le Galayse.

The incidents of the German, Welsh, and English versions of the story, where they vary from the tale of Crestien, also disagree with each other; such aberration, according to the remarks above offered, is a plain indication that the changes must be considered as due only to the fancy of the several recasters. Minor agreements between traits of the English poem and those, for example, mentioned by Wolfram, are to be disregarded, being in every case explicable as due to a common interpretation of the data of the French original.

The assumption of an early Anglo-Norman romance as the presumed source of the English verse (suggested by G. Paris) ought not to be considered so long as the production can be explained as a variation founded on a *vera causa*, on the celebrated and easily accessible work of Crestien. The outlines of the latter composition might easily, in the fourteenth century, come into the knowledge of a popular poet.

#### NOTES.

*Perceval's saga.* The saga is edited by E. Kölbing, *Riddarasögur*, 1872. The Norseman spells *graal* as *bravll*, and defines it as *textus*, again explained as *ganganda greiða*. The dictionary defines *greiða* as comb. It is impossible to guess just what the renderer meant, or how he got his idea.

*Parsival.* In the abundant literature of Wolfram's poem, I have not met with the explanation of sources above given, and which seems to be indicated by the correspondences to Robert de Boron and his successors. As to Wolfram's notion of the *Graal*, compare his definition, as the wish of Paradise (v. 351), or the abundance of earthly desire (v. 354), with the lines of Robert, where it is said to be the accomplishment of man's wish, *La douceur l'accomplissement — De leur cuers tout entierement* (2565, 2566; see, also, 3042, 3043), and his derivation from *agrür*.

*Crons.* The work of Heinrich vom Türlin is edited by H. T. Scholl, Stuttgart, 1852. Of the portion relating to the Grail, an abstract is given by Nutt.

*Titirel.* Edited by K. A. Hahn, 1842. (For the Grail, see stanza 6172 ff.)

*Peredur.* See the treatises of A. Nutt and of W. Golther. As an example of mistranslation on the part of the Welsh writer may be mentioned that of the advice given to Perceval by his mother, to be constant in praying to Our Lord in church: *Sor toutes riens vos voel proier — Que à glises et à monstier — Allés proier Nostre Segnor* (Potvin, 1761–1763). The Welshman renders: *lle y gwelych eglwys, kan dy pader urthi* (where thou seest a church, sing thy pater at it). Crestien makes Perceval see the red and white of his lady's complexion in the blood-stained snow; the Welshman adds black (following, no doubt, a situation of folk-tales) by introducing a raven as type of her black hair; for this feature he made preparation at an earlier point by noting the red spots on the cheek, and the jet-black hair. But in his passage relating the revery, translations from the French are numerous and literal; it is therefore evident that he set out deliberately, pen in hand, to improve his source. He attributes lameness to Peredur's teacher; afterwards we find this characteristic assigned to another personage, the uncle in whose house is seen the bleeding spear (the Fisher King of Crestien). Again, he identifies the castle of the lady who owns the self-playing chessmen with the Castle of Wonders, but presently corrects himself by noting the latter as the mansion of the maimed king. I should regard these slips as the work of an author who wrote *currente calamo*, and did not revise. He thinks it necessary to provide the stag whose head the hero is required to obtain with a single unicorn-like horn as long as a lance, with which he slays all the beasts he meets. The addition belongs to the usual extravagance of the recaster. The member of Arthur's household who aids Peredur in putting on the arms of the slain knight, in Crestien, is Yonet, page of Gawain; in the Peredur, it is Owain, an evident misunderstanding, being an example of the process above mentioned by which a well-known personage is substituted for an obscure one. Wolfram falls into the same mistake. In the Percevelle, the aider is Gawain. Just so the Welsh tale makes Gwalchmei and Owain figure among the knights met by the youth in the forest, while the English poem introduces Ewain, Gawain, and Kay. That the Welshman makes the teacher of Peredur an uncle is, according to the general principle, already remarked, of connecting the tale by family alliances; so, again, in the English verse, where the agreement is once more in virtue of a principle of evolution common to recasts. As the outlines of the plot altogether vary, it is clear that no attention is due to such minor agreements, explicable on usual logical rules of development. In the language, costume, and scenery there is nothing to indicate for the Welsh work a date much earlier than the MS. assigned to about 1380.

*Sir Percevelle.* For examples of correspondences to Crestien, see the work of W. Golther, above cited. In the English poem the name of the hero is spelt Syr Percevelle the Galayse (1643), Sir Percevelle de Galays (1990). The subscription has Syr Perceval de Gales, which led the editor to the name Sir Perceval of Galles. It does not appear that the poet had any definite idea about the adjective; just as did Wolfram, he only transliterated Perceval li galois. That neither comprehended the epithet *galois* is only one of the instances of misinterpretation which show the priority of Crestien.



## TALES RELATED TO THE ENFANCES OF PERCEVAL.

NOTICE has now been taken of the stories directly connected with the legend of the Grail. Brief mention, however, may be made of certain narratives which have to do with the history of a simple youth brought up in the wilderness, and unacquainted with the manners of chivalry.

(a.) *Li Bians Desconnés*. (The Fair Unknown). A story very common in mediæval Europe, as in other quarters of the globe, recited the adventures of a son in search of a father, whom he meets without recognition, and with whom he fights a battle, either tragic or peaceful in issue. In the first continuator of Crestien's Perceval, such an experience is assigned to an illegitimate son of Gawain; when questioned, the youth can say no more than that he is ignorant of his name, having only been called in his home, where his father is hated, the nephew of his uncle. We learn that the boy has been stolen in youth, brought up by a fosterer, and taught by a teacher, who instructed him to value his arms. The incoherent tale shows him in the company of a wandering damsel, who is obliged to give him lessons in the use of lance and shield. In a joust he slays his opponent, but, being ignorant of death, wishes the latter to renew the encounter; he prefers to expose his body rather than his shield. It seems safe to set down these last-mentioned traits as belonging to the mass of floating jests concerning the fortunes of a simpleton. Other adventures of the hero have no resemblance to that of Perceval. The second continuator knew that the son of Gawain was called the Fair Unknown; Renaud de Beaujeu, an imitator of Crestien, made him the hero of a poem, and gave him the name of Guinglain. The English version of the tale has an introduction, in which the mother is made to keep her son from the knowledge of arms, and to call him nothing but Fair Son. This idea, as already remarked, appears in Wolfram, being with him a misinterpretation of Crestien, and I see no reason to suppose that a different mode of explanation should be adopted in the English production.

(b.) *Carduino*. With the poem of Renaud is connected an Italian poem of the fourteenth century, constituting a very free treatment of the theme. The mother of the hero, after the murder of her husband by knights high in favor at Arthur's court, retires to the wilderness. The boy, who is told that his mother and himself are the only human beings, finds two javelins in the wood, and obtains food and clothing by their use. He sees the knights of the king,

and insists on leaving the wood; his mother gives him the arms of his father, and advises him to seek Arthur. Here he is unable to name his father, but is retrained by the king. Then follow adventures somewhat answering to Renaud's tale. In the end, Carduino avenges his father by killing his poisoners, who are none other than Gaheries and his brother Gawain. After receiving knighthood, the hero continues to use throwing-spears as his only weapon: such extravagant representation is quite out of the old manner, as is the character of traitor assigned to Gawain. I can therefore see no reason for supposing the tale to be anything else but a freely imaginative treatment of ideas obtained at second-hand from Renaud and Crestien.

(c.) *Tyolet*. A French poem contained in a collection of *lais* recites how Tyolet, the son of a widowed dame of the forest, has skill in calling beasts by whistling. While pursuing a white stag, the latter turns into an armed knight, from whom he inquires the uses of hauberk, sword, and so on. He asks what kind of an animal is a knight, and is told that it is a beast who eats others. Accordingly he resolves to become a knight-beast; his mother is at first troubled, but provides her son with his father's arms, and sends him to Arthur's court, where he rides rudely into the hall, and announces himself as a knight-beast; he says that his mother has sent him to learn courtesy, and is retained by the king. A lady appears, the daughter of the king of Logres, who offers her hand to the knight who can get the foot of the white stag guarded by seven lions. This adventure is accomplished by Tyolet, who weds the princess and becomes king.

The language and rhythm of this poem, in conformity with the plot, indicate it as relatively late. The writer supposes Logres (Loegria, Arthur's kingdom) to be some outlying district. He knows that Evain (*i. e.* Yvain) is the son of the fairy Morgain, as represented in the later Arthurian romance. The idea that a stag turns into a knight, and offers instruction to a youth, seems characteristic of later extravagance. I see no reason to regard the story as anything more than a romantic invention of the thirteenth century, in which the writer has imitated certain features of Crestien's poem.

The compositions mentioned do not exhaust the number of those in which the youth of the hero exhibits some analogy to that of Perceval. Thus Mériadec, a youth educated in solitude, is ignorant of his father's name, and has been called only *le beau valet*. Having learned from his mother of his father's death at the hand of Gawain, he seeks to avenge that injury. Through the mother a

reconciliation takes place. Mériadec is a two-sworded hero; this possession of two swords, as well as the incidents noted, is obviously only borrowed from Crestien, of whom the writer of *Chevalier as deus esples* was an unblushing imitator.

So, in a version of the *Chevalier au Cygne*, we find the Swan-knight, when about to do battle, instructed by a wandering damsel, after the example of the son of Gawain in the continuator: as the older version of the poem does not contain these features, it is plain that their introduction is only another example of the manner in which a popular tale gave occasion for *décalcomanie* on the part of the average poet.

#### FOLK-TALES REPRESENTING THE HERO AS SIMPLETON.

It has been observed that the conception of a disinherited and outcast hero, who begins life as a rude and simple lad, is a common one in folk-tales. The connection between this theme and the story now under consideration is too general to be illuminative; it has been thought, however, that certain narratives present a nearer analogy.

(a.) *Peronnik l'idiot*. In his *Le foyer breton*, St. Souvestre included a tale of this sort. Peronnik is a boy dependent on charity, and regarded as wanting in intelligence. As the story says, he can eat when he is hungry, sleep when he is tired, and sing like a bird. A knight appears at his dwelling, and asks the way to Kerglas (the Green Castle), where are kept the Gold Basin, which supplies food, cures sickness, and awakes the dead, and the Diamond Lance, which is able to slay all whom it touches. According to the instructions given the knight by a hermit, in order to reach the castle it is necessary to traverse the Deceitful Wood, take an apple from a tree defended by a dwarf armed with a fairy spear, and obtain the Flower that Laughs, guarded by a lion; to pass the Lake of Dragons; do battle with a Black Man armed with an iron ball which never misses, and of itself returns to the hand; to encounter the temptations of the Vale of Pleasures, and receive directions from a lady attired in black, who will mount behind. The sorcerer, who is the lord of the Green Castle, happens to pass on his mare followed by a colt, carrying basin and lance. Peronnik learns the spell which summons the colt, and, under pretence of being a servant of the castle, is able to accomplish the adventure. The black lady turns out to be the Plague. The apple, fruit from the tree of Good and Evil, makes the enchanter susceptible of death, after which the Plague puts an end to his career. The Laughing Flower acts as a key to open the gates of the castle, which vanishes in an earthquake, and Peronnik escapes with basin and lance, which enable him to dispose of the enemies

of the king of Brittany : he conquers Anjou, Poitou, and Normandy ; goes to the Holy Land, and forces the emperor of the Saracens to give him his daughter in marriage.

The editor notes the resemblance of this narration to Arthurian romances ; this likeness is obvious, though the tale has no near affinity to Crestien's. Unhappily, however, the history has little similarity to genuine Breton folk-tales, and it is scarcely to be doubted that in the account we have only a literary recast, answering to the inventions of Hersart de la Villemarqué.

(b.) *Laoideh an Amadan M6ir* (Lay of the Great Fool). A Gaelic ballad, which differs from the preceding in being genuine and exactly reported, possesses all the mystic character of such verse. It is recited how an enigmatical personage known as the Great Fool, while engaged in an unexplained expedition to Lochlann (Scandinavia), becomes enveloped in a magic mist, meets a Gruagach (demonic being), and is induced to drink from a cup offered by the latter, with the result that the demon deprives him of both legs below the knee. In spite of this loss, he continues his journey with rapidity, and is able to overtake and capture a hound, white, with red ears (dogs of hell or fairyland are of such hue), belonging to another Gruagach, who demands return of the animal in exchange for hospitality, and conducts the youth to his castle, the Golden City, where the guest is left to guard the wife and treasure of the host, who goes hunting. The house is visited by a lover of the wife ; the intruder is seized by the Fool, and forced to surrender the legs of the latter, which he has annexed. In the end, the Gruagach of the cup returns, and according to a common and no doubt ancient feature of Gaelic tales, we learn that the master of the house, in transformation, was also the enchanter and the interloper, his object in arranging these different appearances being to test the courage and worth of the hero.

It occurred to Campbell that the cup of this wild legend might have some relation to the Grail ; but, for my part, I am unable to discover any similarity.

(c.) *Story of the Great Fool*. The lay was explained to Campbell by a tale professing to give the history of the Fool ; but, as usual in such explanations, it is very doubtful whether the prose and the verse have in reality any connection. The Great Fool is represented as a posthumous son of a foe of the king. To preserve his life, his mother flies with her son to the wilderness, where the youth grows up in ignorance, distinguished by ferocity and strength. He runs down wild deer, and his mother makes him a dress of the hides ; he barbarously kills his foster-brother for making him the subject of jests ; he catches the king's horse, rides to the palace, kills the king's son, and obliges the king to recognize him as heir. He is afterwards sent to rescue a lady from a dragon.

Mr. Nutt has pointed out that the story of the Irish and Scotch-Gaelic hero Fionn has similar traits. The latter is also a posthumous son whose life is in danger, is reached in the desert by Druidesses, exhibits extraordinary strength, and overtakes wild deer by speed of foot. He has no proper name of his own, receiving his appellation from the whiteness of his skin. I can see in these traits no resemblance to the story of Perceval, further than that some of the subordinate incidents, like the running down of the deer, floating adventures common to mediæval folk-lore, do appear, not in the tale of Crestien, but in certain of its popularized forms.

Beyond these, it seems scarce worth while to cite folk-tales for the purpose of illustrating the story. According to the analysis previously given, the incidents of Crestien's plot do not belong to any single folk-tale, but represent separate elements, such as floated in solution in the folk-lore of all European countries, threaded together in purely literary fashion.

As respects the Grail, examples of healing and food-producing vessels might be cited in abundance from the popular belief of every age and country; but, as already observed, the dish of Crestien's tale has none of these properties; the analogy, such as it is, belongs solely to the later variants, which are nothing more than free interpretations of a theme made continually more and more mysterious.

Brief mention may be made of the two modern compositions which have made the Holy Grail a household word. Tennyson's idyl, "The Holy Grail," follows the outlines of the French prose romance, the *Queste*; as in the latter, the quest begins with the apparition at Camelot of the sacred vessel. A quest is vowed, in which, as in the French work, Galahad, Percivale, and Bors are the most honored participants; but whereas in the *Queste* these three remain together and journey to the Spiritual City, the English author makes Galahad depart alone. Percivale is subject to delusive visions, and ultimately returns to court to tell the story. It is explained that the duties of the king forbid his taking part in the search. The insight of the poet induced him to represent the Grail as the cup of the eucharist, a function which, as above shown, it had performed in the tale of Robert de Boron. In Tennyson's account, the moral and religious ideas connected with the Grail are not essentially changed from the mediæval history.

On the other hand, the *Parsifal* of Wagner exhibits a complete reconstruction. The composer based his drama on the work of Wolfram of Eschenbach, whose proper names he uses; but while in Wolfram the story still consists of two independent narrations, Wagner wove the adventures into one whole. In Crestien, Arthur's queen has retired of her free choice into the desert, where, by

the aid of an astrologer, she builds a manor; in Wolfram, the magician, who receives the name Clinschor, is represented as an evil-minded enchanter, whose spells have made the inmates of the castle his prisoners, but who has no connection with Parzival or with the Grail; Wagner, following the artistic impulse tending toward unity, already noted as characteristic of reconstructors, makes Klingsor the adversary of the knights of the Grail, while Kundry is described as his agent in the task of seduction, to whom Amfortas has fallen victim. Opportunity is taken to bring Parsifal to the enchanted castle of Klingsor, containing the flower-maidens, where he himself is subject to the temptations of Kundry, and by experience becomes able to sympathize with the tempted Amfortas. Wagner, like Tennyson, was led by his artist's instinct to identify the Grail with the chalice of the eucharist. For the psychologic meaning, he accepted suggestions taken from Christian and Buddhist story; he set forth the conception that the generous pity of a simple heart is the best remedy for human suffering. Beyond this general idea, it would be idle to seek in the drama for philosophic lessons; the action is to be taken, not as mystical symbolism, but as fancy which pleases to move in a faery world, and is emancipated from necessary adherence either to fact, probability, or tradition. Of the musical and poetic genius with which the theme is developed, there is here no need to speak.

We are now in a position to take a comprehensive view of the evolution. One of the most universal themes of folk-tales consists in presenting the fortunes of a simple youth, who from a despised and indigent position attains success and honor. In the middle of the twelfth century, when romantic histories were commonly referred to the heroic age of Britain, it was natural that a story of this nature should receive Arthurian setting. Current jests set forth the ridiculous mistakes of a lad suddenly introduced into the great world, with whose usages he is unacquainted; the repute of barbarism attaching to Wales led to the designation of this tyro as belonging to this race. Hence the hero of the Arthurian narration was called Perceval the Welshman, not as really belonging to the country, but only as unjustly identified with a Welsh rustic. The title indicates that the tale, which from the first dealt with the education of simplicity, must have been in the nature of literary invention, not of traditional currency. This history came to the knowledge of the most celebrated of French trouvères; that Cretien at an early time had marked it out for future treatment may be concluded from his mention, in previous works, of Perceval li galois as among the chief knights of the Round Table. What may have been the nature of this antecedent story it is impossible to con-  
.

ture; Crestien, an imaginative artist, so transformed the narratives he treated, that his beautiful and fanciful poems, animated by psychologic principles which form their constitutive elements, must be presumed to have borne little resemblance to the lost compositions which supplied their germs; while, in turn, these preceding productions were probably themselves artistic and literary, remote from the character of folk-tales out of the débris of which they were constructed. In respect to locality and nomenclature, such fictions are to be considered as purely the arbitrary addition of cultivated romancers, who elected to lay the scene in a conventional British antiquity.

It is with the work of Crestien that the known history of the tale begins; he may have obtained suggestions from the European variant of the history of the Buddha; in his hands, the part of the narrative dealing with Perceval describes the education of a simple youth in the three fields of arms, love, and ethics. For the first section, he set out from the popular jest; the ignorant youth, enamored of the radiance belonging to knights, seeks that dignity at the hands of Arthur; successively by his mother and teacher Perceval is instructed respecting the central duties of knighthood, namely, the service of ladies, charity, and piety. For the love story, the poet had only to utilize the familiar theme reciting the rescue of a besieged damsel. There remained the necessity of learning to be "of measure," of attaining self-control; for this, the *trouvère* had recourse to a literary material of which the roots go back to Hellenic literature of the best Athenian period, setting forth reticence in speech as chief of virtues. Whether, in this essay, the author reconstructed a situation given by his predecessors, or whether the portion of the poem dealing with the idea is of his own construction as respects the skeleton as well as the flesh, will always remain a matter of conjecture; in any case, the psychologic conception constitutes the determining influence, which has gathered about it, as filings arranging themselves around the pole of a magnet, the traditional elements, attracted as separate atoms.

In the course of his narration, the poet had occasion to mention a vessel used to hold the oblate, which, according to a favorite conception of the time, constituted the sole food of a personage devoted to religion. In this story, the *grail* had a place only accidental; but it so happened that, in consequence of the incompleteness of the romance, the author's intent was open to misinterpretation; the vessel was expounded as identical, first with the eucharistic cup, afterwards with the paschal dish. These explanations gave opportunity to romancers affecting a conventional piety, though in the main animated by literary motives, who undertook to produce fash-

ionable fiction, and appealed to the religious sentiment, dissatisfied with poetry which exalted the splendors of the world; in their recasts, fancy was converted into myth, and chivalry resolved into asceticism. In the end, it proved necessary to exchange the original hero for a new actor who should present a type of the Redeemer; the erring but interesting Perceval was banished in favor of the sinless and colorless Galahad. The pietistic essay was successful; in place of warm and living humanity, the persons of the action became mythologic figures, vague, vast, and cold as reflections cast by a mirage. Thanks to the disappearance of intermediate steps, the process is not altogether discernible; all that remains is a much-edited result. Of this reconstructed fiction, some portion came to the knowledge of the most interesting of German mediæval poets, and by him was fused with the earlier narrative in such manner as to form a poem intentionally typical of human life. The composition of Wolfram was employed by Wagner, who, with abundance of the free imagination which has characterized every step of the evolution, produced a work distinctively modern in its spirit, though mediæval in its setting. The early history of the theme in Wales and England consists in the degradation of psychological fiction to the popular tale.

As respects the general theory of human thought, the growth of the legend of the Holy Grail furnishes a lesson of caution in laying down general rules. The process is not always from gods to heroes, from a mythic to an heroic stage; the development is quite as often in the other direction. In the Arthurian cycle, as I have elsewhere observed, "literature preceded myth, humanity came before miracle."

#### NOTES.

*Biaus Desconñens, Carduino, Tyelet.* Necessary references will be found in the treatise of G. Paris, *Romans en vers*, etc. The English variant of Renaud's work is discussed by W. H. Schofield, *Lybeaus Desconñs*, in (*Harvard*) *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, vol. v., 1895. As bearing on the general question whether romances of the Arthurian cycle are to be regarded primarily as of literary invention, or rather as of traditional currency, it is of interest to determine whether the English poem is a rehash of Renaud's *Guinglain*, or is borrowed from some independent and presumably earlier version of the same theme. To my mind, the relation of proper names determines the correctness of the former view; arrangement in parallel columns demonstrates the priority of the French. The English forms are either corruptions of those of Renaud (and that of names borrowed from Crestien: Gifflet li fuis d'O, altered into Giffroun le fludous; Orguillos de la lande, given as Otes de lile) or else commonplace appellations substituted for names difficult to anglicize (hence the change of la lande into l'ile, of Gué perilleus into Pont perillous, reproduced as Point perillous). The author of Carduino omits proper names; the writer of Wigalois invents a new set. Renaud's names also were probably of his own invention.



## *The Legend of the Holy Grail.*

*Peronnik l'idiot.* Related in the work of É. Souvestre, *Le foyer breton*, Paris, 1874, ii. 137 ff. The sophistication of the story is shown by a comparison with a similar but genuine folk-tale given in *Le conteur breton* of A. Froude and G. Millin, Brest, 1870, pp. 133-180. In the latter also the hero rescues a lady from an enchanter's castle by the aid of a soporific herb, which puts to sleep the lord of the mansion; but the atmosphere of the narrative answers to that of European tales dealing with the rescue of a heroine from the hands of a cannibal ogre, and is quite remote from the chivalric and artificial coloring of Souvestre's story.

*Lay of the Great Fool.* The reader will find an account of this and kindred productions in the book of Mr. Nutt.

*Parsifal.* The literature of Wagner's drama is noted by H. T. Finck, *Wagner and his Works*, New York, 1893. The treatise of E. Wechsler, *Die sage vom Heiligen Gral, in ihrer entwicklung bis auf Richard Wagner's Parsifal*, has come to my notice only through the review in *Folk-Lore*, ix. 1898, pp. 346 ff.; the position taken, as stated in the review, does not appear to me to require any modification of the theory offered in these articles.

*Pellesvans.* The French prose romance, of which an account has been given under this name, is translated into English by S. Evans,—*The High History of the Holy Graal*, London, 1898. See review in *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, No. XLVI., 1899. A Welsh translation of the fourteenth century has been published, with English version, by R. Williams, "Y seint Greal," in vol. i. of his *Selections from the Hengwrt MSS.*, London, 1876-1892. For the passage above cited, in regard to the translator's treatment of proper names, see p. 548 of the English version.

## VII.

### THE GRAIL AND GLASTONBURY.

My articles on this legend (vol. x., 1897, Nos. 37, 38, 39; vol. xi., 1898, No. 40; vol. xii., 1899, Nos. 46, 47) require an afterword; appended notes relate to earlier papers of the series.

The treatise on the Church of Glastonbury, attributed to William of Malmesbury, recites that Philip the Apostle sent to Britain twelve disciples, over whom he placed his friend Joseph of Arimathia (Arimathæa); the twelve preach the gospel, and arrive at Glastonbury, an outlying and swamp-surrounded island (cultivable lands in Somerset were so called), known as Iniswitrin or Insula Avalloniæ; here they live as hermits, and build the first church of Saint Mary. The author also ascribes the settlement of the place to twelve brothers from the north.

Robert de Boron mentions twelve brothers, nephews of Joseph of Arimathia, of whom one is a priest and missionary; these proceed to the Vales of Avalon, a wilderness in the west.

In the year 1191, the bones of King Arthur were exhumed at Glastonbury. It has been suggested that only from this date had the place been identified with Avalon, passages to that effect contained in "De Antiquitate" being interpolations. On the other hand, recent criticism has defended the genuineness of these mentions, as written by William about 1135. The results of my own inquiry (elsewhere to be presented) have convinced me that the former opinion is correct, and that the extant text of "De Antiquitate" represents a very much expanded and altered recast of 1191; before that date no one had dreamed of Joseph as a British evangelist, or of Avalon as anything else than a fairy isle. If this be so, the Avalon of Robert (contrary to my former opinion) is Glastonbury.

The earliest work of the cycle, the *Perceval* of Crestien, is no story of the Grail; the dish belongs to an episode originally incidental, which, as often happens in romantic evolution, has set up an independent development. The true inventor of the tale was Robert, whose imaginative romance was based on suggestions supplied by "De Antiquitate," apocryphal literature relating to Joseph of Arimathia, and the *Perceval*; its subsequent history of the legend, completed in a few decades, consists of successive and fanciful concordances of Robert and Crestien.

## NOTES.

*Recent critical literature.* The French poetry of the cycle is examined by G. Gröber, *Grundriss der romanischer Philologie*, ii. 1, 3, 1898, pp. 500-510, 521-523; he supposes both Crestien and Robert to have used the book of Count Philip, a Latin work composed in England.

A perusal of the book of E. Wechssler, *Die Sage vom Heiligen Gral*, has not changed any of the opinions expressed in these papers; Wechssler thinks the supposititious book to have been written by Welshmen.

The origin of the legend has lately been discussed by A. N. Wesselofsky, *Zur Frage über die Heimath vom Heiligen Gral*, in *Archiv für Slavische Philologie*, xxxii. 1901, 321-385. He refers the romances to oriental sources, assuming two variant forms of the history, used respectively by Robert and the author of the so-called Grand St. Graal. No fragment of any similar oriental composition can be adduced; the argument, purely hypothetical, is in a measure based on etymologies regulated by concordances of sound.

*Perceval.* (I.) The prologue is vulgar nonsense in method, matter, and style heaven-removed from Crestien. The pointless parallel between Philip and Alexander is founded only on the rhyme, *Alexandres-Flandres*. The statement that the poet merely rhymed material transmitted by the patron is verbally (and stupidly) imitated after the pleasing opening lines of the Charete, in which Crestien had made a similar assertion in regard to Marie of Champagne; that the trouvère worked for Philip is borrowed from Mennequier (who, however, probably only affirmed that Crestien had written in the time, not in the name, of the count), see Potvin, vi. 157. *Galois*, in the sense of rude, rustic, compare Tristan, ed. Michel, i. 223. *Graal*, dish, is a common romance word, see Potvin, 16761, and Godefroi, Dictionary. The derivation is probably from *crates*; *gradale*, Ducange; the original meaning seems to have been basket, Wesselofsky, *op. cit.*, 337.

*Robert de Boron.* (II.) The text, both of the verse and prose, has Avaron (*vans d'Avaron*); but that the form is only a scribal error for Avalon is clear from the play of words, l. 3351 (see the prose), with *avalant*. Compare, also, Higden, Polychronicon, v. 332, where Arthur is said to be buried *in valle Avallonia juxta Glastoniam*. Wesselofsky, p. 343, derives Avaron from the Syrian word *havarā*, white; an unfortunate example of etymologizing method. The epilogist says that missing sections of the tale will be lost unless he finds time to treat them; this is a confession that the pretended book of the Grail (assumed according to the usual mediæval fiction) has no existence outside of his inner consciousness.

*Second continuator.* (III.) Gröber thinks Gaucher earlier than the Gawain continuator; comparison of passages relating to the Black Hand, Potvin, 19926, 24470, will give an opposite result.

*Pellesvaus.* (IV.) The abstract needs correction. The car accompanied by the damsels is laden with heads of knights who have perished because of Perceval's failure to put the question. Perceval's father is cousin of Lancelot's father, Ban of Benoic, p. 107; the name shows that the late writer knew the prose Lancelot. The Grail varies through five forms of manifestation, the last being a chalice, p. 250.









*Acme*  
Bookbinding Co., Inc.  
100 Cambridge St.  
Charlestown, MA 02129



3 2044 011 906 104

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED  
AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT  
RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR

R  
B  
E  
N  
I

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED  
AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS  
NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON  
OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED  
BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE  
NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE  
BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.

WIDENER  
CANCELED  
JAN 18 1992

